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Friday
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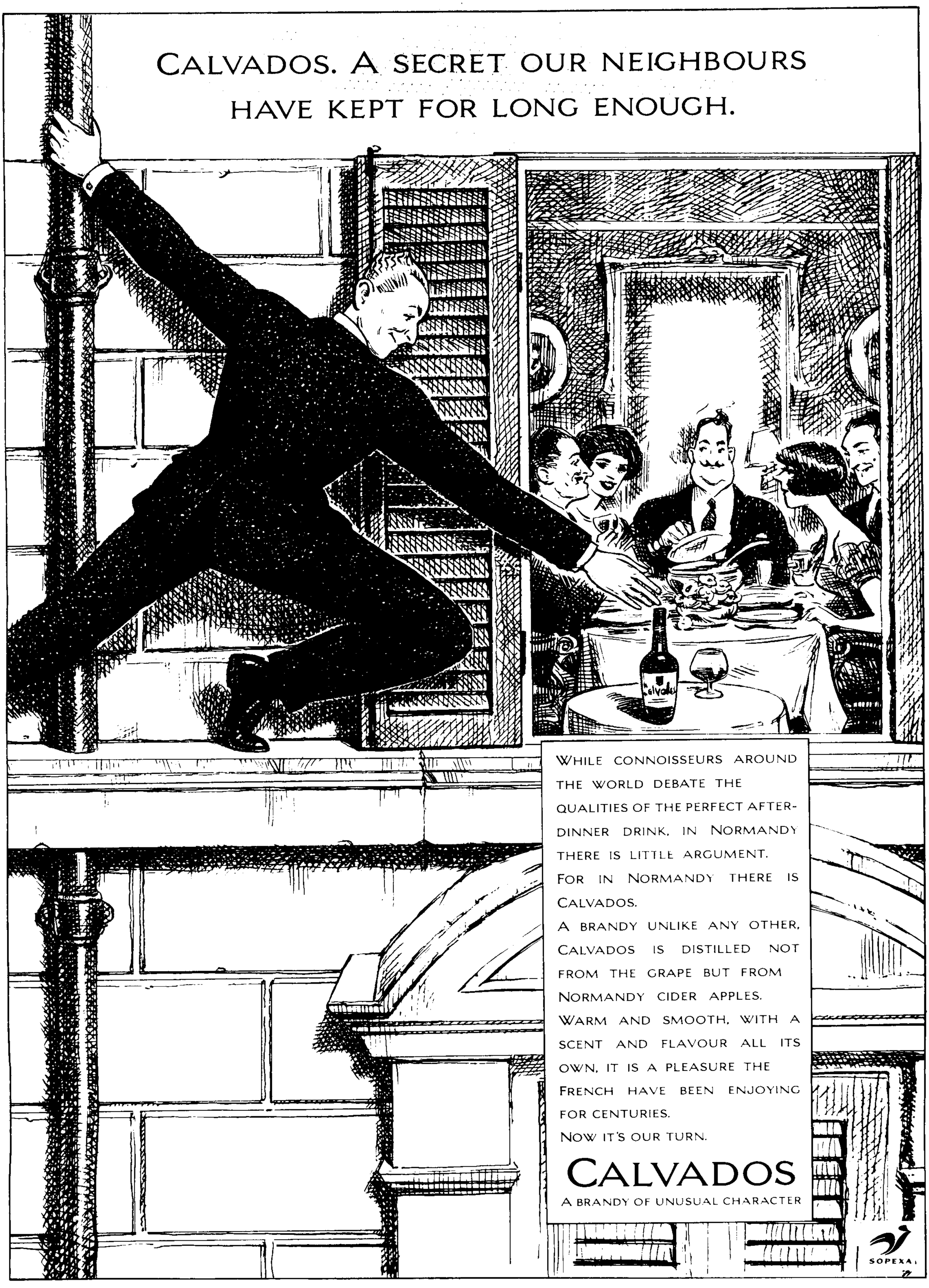

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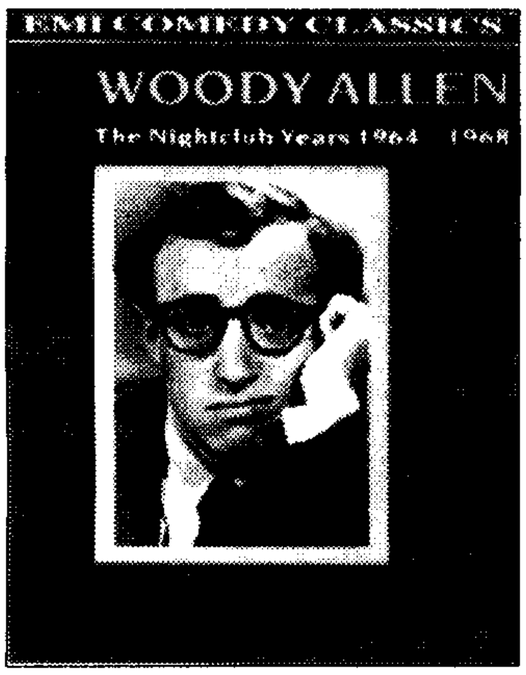

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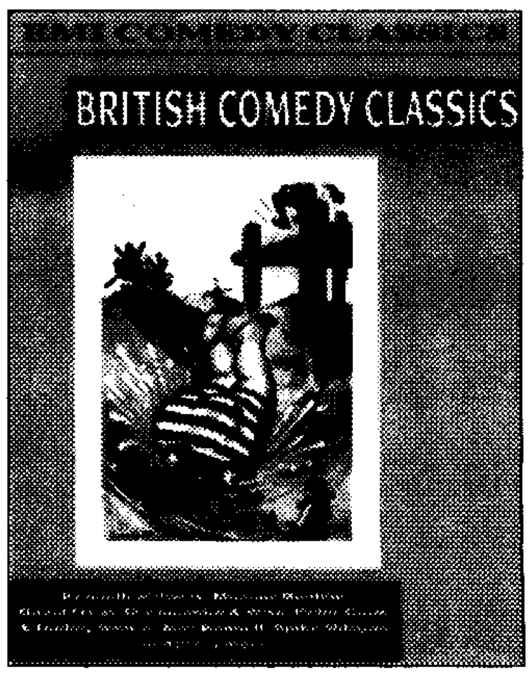

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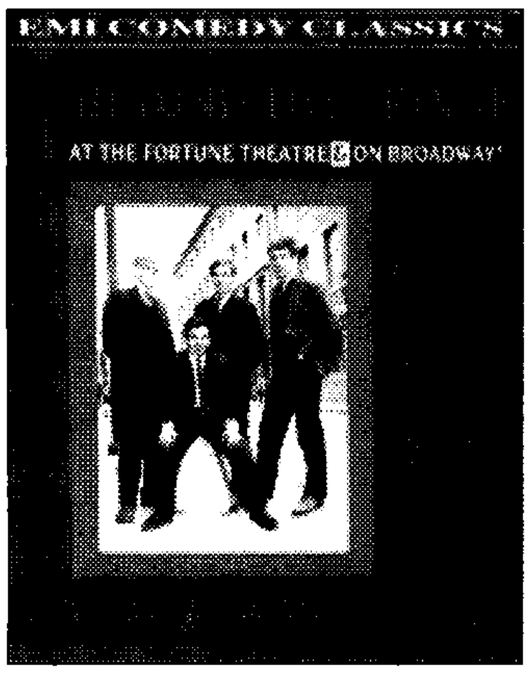

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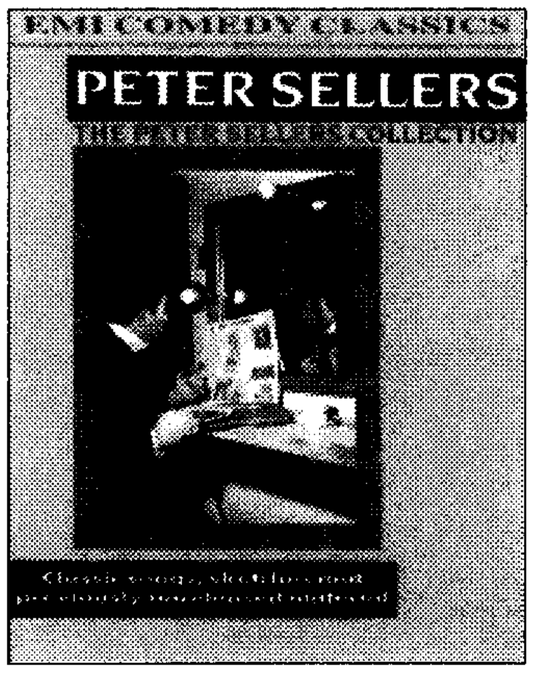

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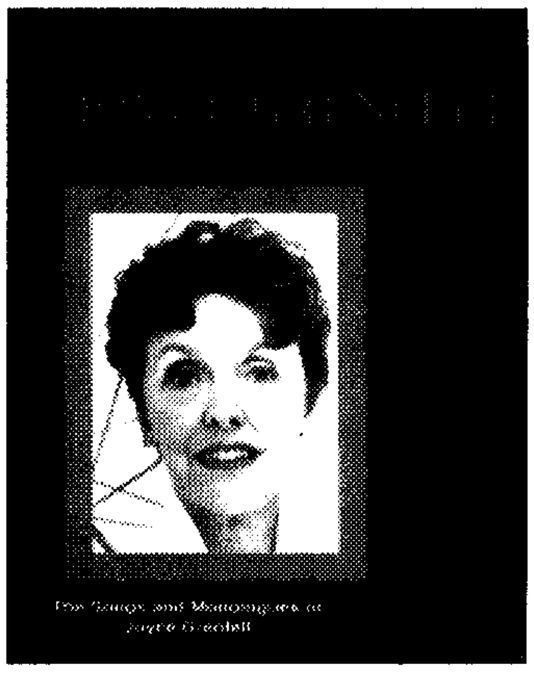

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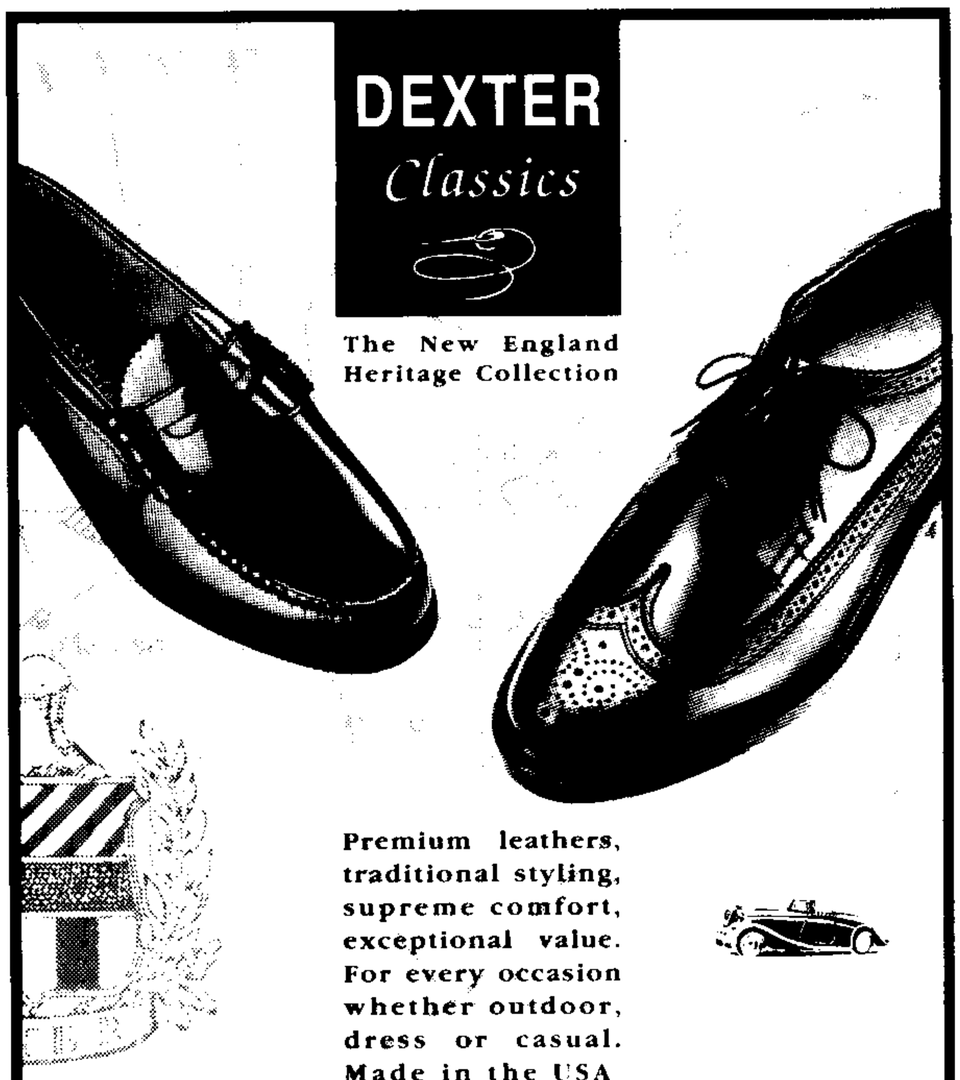

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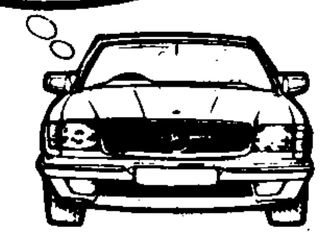
I was completely cleaned out in Beaconsfield



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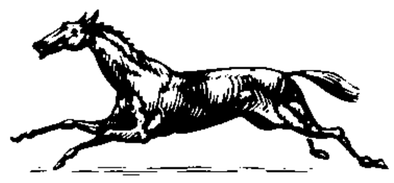

Ninety kilometres from Prague lies the historic town of Pilsen. Here, in 1842, a group of Bohemian brewmasters invented the world's first lager. The refreshing, golden brew was proudly named Pilsen. But before long trouble was brewing. Rival brewers elsewhere proclaimed that they, too, had a beer in the "Pilsner-style". These devious burghers even called their beers Pilsner, Pils or Pilsener. In 1898, things came to a head. The Czechoslovakian brewers went to the Imperial High Court of Germany to prevent the plague of plagiarism. The court agreed how absurd and illogical it was for a beer to be called Pilsen if it wasn't actually from Pilsen. But alas, it was too late for justice to be done. A definite case of locking the stable door after the horse had bolted. Consequently, in 1910, Pilsen was renamed Pilsner Urquell. This translates to "original source of Pilsen". The correct pronunciation is "er-kwell". Nowadays of course, there is still a plethora of beers called Pils. But quite frankly, we are unperturbed. For when it comes to producing the best, we still hold the key.

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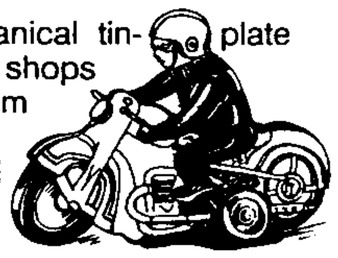

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COLOUR SECTION

● *Lockerbie Special – page 12*

THERE were some interesting mourners at Robert Maxwell's funeral in Jerusalem.

Looking particularly solemn was Victor Louis, Pergamon's long-standing Moscow representative. Louis, as the *Eye* has repeatedly pointed out, is also a KGB officer.

The recent revelations about Pergamon's "friendly" status with the Soviet Communist Party will not have come as a surprise to him; nor will it have surprised the large number of Likud Party officials who turned up (the Israeli Labour Party officials being very poorly represented).

Likud, through the right-wing Zionist forum, had advisers on Maxwell's papers and used Maxwell's contacts to develop their own deals with the Eastern block. Chief mourner Shamir, in particular, was keen on Israel creating links other than with the increasingly fickle USA. Cap'n Bob boasted to *Playboy* magazine that he was Shamir's personal envoy and the scale of the funeral might suggest he was in this case being more truthful than usual.

NICK Davies, the former *Mirror* foreign editor who supplemented his income by arms deals, had what he described as a "preliminary" meeting with Ian Maxwell on Friday 8 November.

Nick has grown somewhat cute of late. He is suggesting that his book, which is being touted by John Blake, may be worth around £150,000 because this is the pay-off he expects from the *Mirror* to keep his mouth shut. And, for this reason, he has been talking to the *News of the Screws* and Lady Eve Bollard at the *Sunday Excess*. (Kelvin McKenzie was once interested, but has since backed off.)

So what will Nick offer for all this money? He has tantalised the *Screws* by promising to outline the late Cap'n Bob's sexual peccadillos.

In these matters he is being advised by the loathsome Stewart Kuttner, long-time friend and currently managing editor of the *Screws*.

DIVERS' safety is the subject of a memorandum that has gone round the rigs offering bonuses to operators who cut down on "lost time accidents". The response has been to make sure that what accidents do happen don't lose any time.

A good example was an incident a few weeks ago on the European Marine Contractors' barge number 331. A diver, Andy Walker, took a shower, which had been treated with sulphuric acid instead of bleach. His lungs were badly burned in the process.

He should have been sent straight on shore for treatment but, in order to pretend this was not a "lost time" accident, he was kept on the barge for five days. Finally, he insisted on returning, even before a relief was able to get to the rig. A "lost time" accident was recorded and a bonus lost. As a result, Andy Walker, who fortunately has recovered, has been told there isn't much point in him looking for another job on the barge.

IN KEN LOACH'S film *Riff-Raff*, London building workers are treated so horribly that one of them sets fire to the site.

This has led the brilliant brains who run the building company Bovis to conclude that a set of dangerous revolutionary workers are burning Bovis sites to the ground.

In August, the firm's site at Minster Court in the City went up in flames, causing £120 million worth of damage. Another £50 million has been lost at Broadgate, Liverpool Street, and in three fires at the Langham Hotel.

In a tactful reference to the building workers' union UCATT, a Bovis source has been quoted as saying: "We don't want to antagonise UCATT more by saying publicly we think union activists could be responsible".

AS A GENERAL election draws nearer, rumours abound that the Dirty Digger may be preparing to shift his newspapers' political allegiance if the Tories don't start improving their position in the opinion polls.

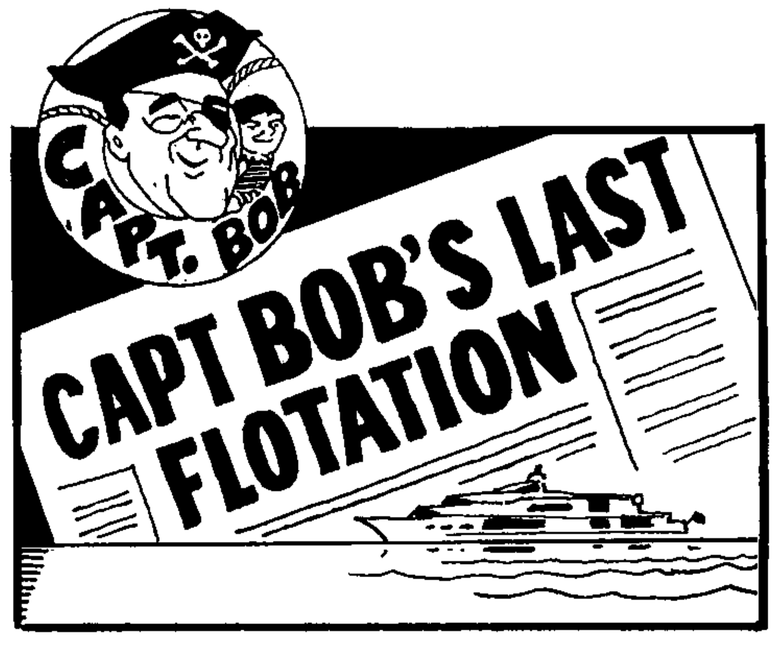
This wouldn't be unprecedented for Murdoch: he has done it when it suited his interests in both Australia and America (and, lest we forget, the *Sun* was a pro-Labour paper when he first owned it). But it would still be an astonishing *volte face*, bearing in mind his close and profitable association with the Thatcher government.

Those who think he may yet change sides point to a few clues, not least the return to Wapping of former *Mirror* editor Roy Greenslade, a one-time Marxist, as the increasingly influential "consultant editor" at *Today*. Since Greenslade's arrival the paper has taken a noticeably more leftish stance — so much so that its political team at the Tory conference were accused of working for a "Labour rag" by other hacks and MPs.

Even the *News of the Screws* has been taking a slightly softer line towards Labour of late. The paper's deputy editor and leader-writer Paul Connew, like Greenslade an ex-*Mirror* man, has begun having quiet lunches with old Labour contacts. More surprisingly still, even Kelvin Mackenzie at the *Sun* has adopted a less rabid tone in recent months, first denouncing Garry Bushell for being "too right-wing" and then, incredibly, hiring Red Ken Livingstone as a regular columnist.

What can this all mean? Naturally, it has nothing to do with the fact that Rupert wouldn't care to be at total war with a victorious Labour government. With his NewsCorp recovering from its near collapse and even BSkyB on the brink of profit, the last thing the Digger wants is a Labour government introducing legislation to restrict media ownership. The Digger also knows that with Maxwell dead the Labour Party has lost its champion, and may be pathetically grateful for any friendly overtures from Wapping.

Watch this space.



STREET OF SHAME

"What a day — we lost our proprietor, editor and reader"

THAT Seymour Hersh, the world's greatest living journalist, and Matthew Evans, chairman of Faber, have generous helpings of egg all over their faces is down to the men's bone headedness — and to the good offices of conman Joe Flynn.

There's no doubt Evans and Hersh (the latter's revelations in *The Samson Option* triggered off the Mirrorgate scandal) have both been rolled by the British-born Flynn — real name Barry Grey. But it was their stubborn refusal to admit the con when they had the chance that makes them look really stupid.

Faber published the Hersh book, which alleged, among other things, that former *Mirror* foreign editor Nick Davies was engaged in gun-running with an Israeli called Ari Ben Menashe, and called a second press conference at which further sensational particulars were to be given relating to the Mordechai Vanunu story.

Like an imperious schoolmaster, Evans read out more Hersh accusations about Davies and said that a certain private detective, whom he refused to name on the spurious grounds of "confidentiality", had been hired by Davies and the Israelis, together with another *Mirror* journalist, Frank Thorne, to bug the telephone of Peter "Fatty" Hounam of the *Sunday Times*.

(It was Hounam who took most of the credit for the Israeli technician Vanunu's story about his country's nuclear industry, and Hounam is well acquainted with Flynn, having paid out good money to him for bogus information about Vanunu some years ago.)

While Evans was short on names at his press conference, it did not take the *Eye*'s representative long to work out that Faber and Hersh had been conned. When asked whether or not he had heard of Joe Flynn or "Barry Peters", and whether or not they were the names he was dealing with, Evans emphatically said they were not.

Evans also was told by the *Eye* of other occasions when Flynn had used the same methods, including his conning of Hounam. To another journalist Evans was emphatic that his sources were impeccable. Evans's judgement was evidently equally "impeccable": Flynn left clues all over the place for anyone to check if they really wanted to or had the brains to be even remotely cautious.

While Evans could easily have embarked on a damage limitation exercise, he stubbornly insisted his story was kosher. Evans had good reason: *he* was responsible for the blunders in the first place! It was Evans who secretly met with Flynn at Schipol airport in the Netherlands and paid him cash; and it was Evans who sent a Western Union money order to Barry Grey, aka Barry E. Grey (Beg — geddit?) in Amsterdam on 4 November.

Hersh behavior at the press conference did him few favours, either. His aggression to journalists was astounding, rounding on all and sundry, accusing some of being part of the *Mirror* camp and the *Mirror* staff of engaging in extraordinary forgeries.

But Hersh and Evans were not the only ones to make idiots of themselves. Afterwards, Tory MP Rupert Allason gave his own press conference and confirmed to eager hacks that his independent sources had confirmed that the "facts" presented by Evans were the same and that he was in constant contact with Hersh.

As the *Eye* went to press, Evans and Hersh were said to be closeted somewhere desperately trying to wipe off some of the egg with which they are covered.

IT SEEMS that *News of the Screws* editor Patsy Chapman's chief henchman may have allowed his passions to overrule his sense. A decision by Paul Connew to allow top features hack Sandie Laming to reside in the Canaries on a £1,000 a month retainer, proved less than useful when the Maxwell story broke.

For while other lesser tabloids frantically jetted their hacks to Tenerife, the *Screws* should have been well ahead of the pack with La Laming already in situ.

Alas, this was not to be. Despite Ms Laming's generous terms with Murdoch's Sunday organ, it seems she was "unavailable" to cover the story for a reputed three days. Redfaces at the *NoW* failed to disguise the fact that no one even seemed to have her number.

It is now rumoured that Connew may have confused Tenerife with a certain notorious African republic whose affairs he is interested in discussing with La Laming. This could also go some way to explain his vociferous defence of the blonde Laming whose decision to base herself in the sun-kissed playground met with fierce cross-examination by *NoW* supremo Stuart Kuttner.

JAMES "Toady" Adams, the *Sunday Times*'s mustachioed defence hack who doubles up as chief henchman to Andrew Neill, threw a leaving party in a Wapping warehouse last week before departing for his new post as Washington correspondent.

"Andrew has always been very generous, honest and decent to me," he told the assembled *ST* hacks with a grin. "Which is more than any of you lot can say about him."

Indeed. Adams will be particularly missed by the security services, whose tame poodle he has been for many years — not only in the pages of the *Sunset Times* but even while off-duty. Not long ago he sent an indignant letter to the author James Rusbridger, whose book *The Intelligence Game* includes a brief section on the Gibraltar shootings which suggests that MI5 knew very well the IRA trio had no weapons or explosives on them at the time they were gunned down by the SAS.

Rusbridger's book didn't mention Adams, but the patriotic hack nevertheless took up the cudgels. "The idea that you could believe that the Security Service and the SAS works in the way you suggest is almost laughable," he wrote. "Indeed, I think putting about such theories does neither those groups nor the country as a whole any service."

ON 10 November, the *News of the World* congratulated itself loudly on having helped the RSPCA smash an illegal dog fighting ring. Two of those charged ended up with prison sentences.

All very noble, you might think — but the *Screws* itself paid two convicted criminals, Graham Curtis Hall and Anthony Reynolds, to infiltrate the gang and take the incriminating videos. This formed the basis for the *Screws* story and the prosecution's case.

Hall himself appears in an Irish video fastening a terrier on to a captive fox. And as *Screws* editor Patsy Chapman knows — because she is on the board of the Press Complaints Bureau — newspapers are no longer permitted to give criminals money for stories that are the result of criminal activity.

Perhaps this is a story the Press Complaints Bureau should investigate...

LORD Stevens of Ludgate paid fulsome tribute to Robert Maxwell on the front page of the *Daily Express* (see OBN). But he somehow neglected to mention the reason for his gratitude to the fat man: it was Maxwell who enabled him to buy Express Newspapers.

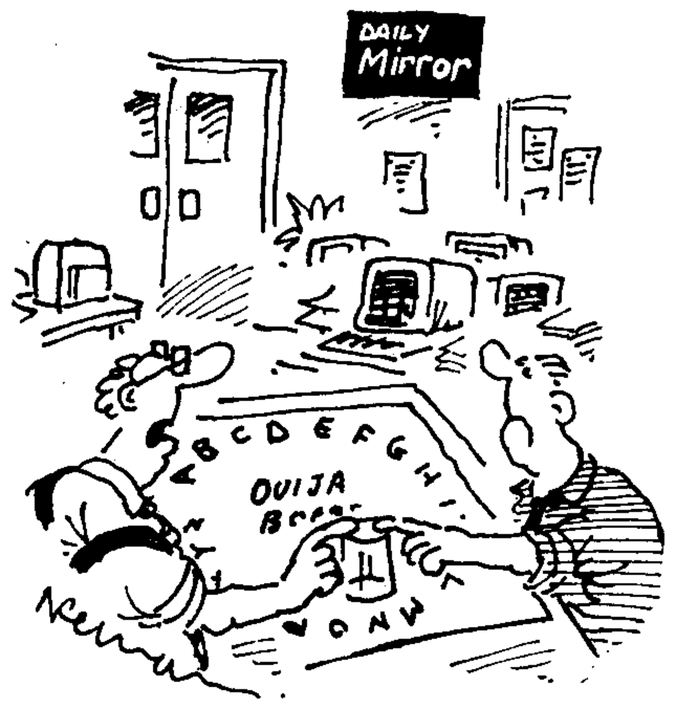
Back in 1984, Maxwell owned a stake of about 15 per cent in Fleet Holdings, the then owner of the Express Group, but had to get rid of it following his acquisition of the *Mirror*. Lord "Whelks" Matthews, Fleet's chairman, offered to buy the shares but Maxwell refused. Instead Cap'n Bob sold them to Lord Stevens.

Another of Lord Stevens's companies, Montague Investment Management, ran Maxwell's pension funds — which were duly invested in Fleet Holdings, too. This meant that, thanks to Maxwell, Stevens either owned or controlled about 20 per cent of Fleet — a springboard from which it was easy to take over Express Newspapers altogether, however hard Lord Whelks might try to stop him.

LAST weekend's *Sindie* carried a feature by Angela Neustatter about children who become addicted to computer games. However, the only child quoted in the piece was an 11-year-old boy called Cato Hoeben. By some extraordinary oversight, Ms Neustatter forgot to mention that Cato Hoeben is her son.

Such incestuous self-promotion seems to be all the rage at the *Sindie* these days. In the previous week's issue, *Indie* snapper Herbie Knott had a photo of Diana and Terence Donovan reclining on a leather *chaise longue*, in front of which he had artfully arranged a few books — most prominent being a volume entitled *Black and White*. The author's name was not visible.

Black and White is, in fact, a collection of photos... by *Indie* snapper Herbie Knott.



"What's the leader today, Bob?"

FOOTBALL NEWS

ONE activity which will benefit enormously from Robert Maxwell's enforced retirement is football.

With unmatched skill the non-playing Cap'n united rival fans with pointless plans to merge league also-rans Reading FC and Oxford United into the Thames Valley Royals and his rule-bending attempts to buy his way into enough clubs to start his own Super League, including Watford, Spurs, Manchester United and Derby County.

It was at Derby Maxwell best displayed his inadequate grasp of football club ownership. After helping the club buy its way out of the third division, he refused to spend money on players to rank alongside the club's handful of classy internationals such as Peter Shilton and Dean Saunders, kept himself well away from the ground and allowed the club to slide back into the second division last year without a murmur.

He also revealed a childish streak of petulance in fending off criticism from the local press over his neglect of the once-proud club. This reached its peak when he banned Radio Derby's football commentator, Graham Richards, after the latter had hosted a radio phone-in during which Maxwell was bitterly attacked by fans.

It had been assumed that all would return to normal when Maxwell sold the club to a group of local businessmen a few months ago. Indeed the new chairman even said on Radio Derby, shortly before he took control, that Richards was welcome back at the ground. That was until he took another look at the conditions of sale which state that Richards be banned for all time.

Fortunately, the special clause mentioned nothing about the effectiveness of the ban in the event of Maxwell's promotion to his own super league.

WHILE the Government fudges and fiddles over Europe in the run up to the general election, the question of whether the EEC is or is not a federal institution has never been an issue among diplomats who all accept that its purpose is the creation of a European superstate.

This was spelt out in "the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart of 19 June 1983", which said: "The Heads of State and Government of the Member States... resolved to continue the work begun on the basis of the Treaties of Paris and Rome and to create *a united Europe*... capable of assuming the responsibilities incumbent on it by virtue of its *political* role." It was signed by none other than Margaret Thatcher on Britain's behalf.

Its most significant aspect is the date: 19 June 1983, 10 days after the general election of 9 June which returned the Conservatives. Before the election, in which Labour was led by Michael Foot, an anti-marketeer, the Government would not have dared sign such a statement. The other member countries understood and were content to wait while Britain made empty gestures.

As another election approaches the 11 will be content to wait while Britain makes more empty gestures. Douglas Hurd, the diplomat's politician, almost said as much last week. There would not be an agreement, he said, if the integrationists insisted on pressing their proposals but they "don't have to renounce their hopes, they just have to realise these hopes can't be reached in 1991". In 1992 perhaps?

FEW spectacles have been as entertaining as watching Neil Kinnock wriggle and writhe over Europe. Presuming the Welsh Windbag knows where Europe is, where exactly does he stand on the issue?

Back in 1975 during the referendum on the EEC, the firebrand Kinnock sided with mainstream Labour Party thinking: Britons should vote against the terms for entering the market. The people voted in favour.

As in other areas of Labour policy, since becoming party leader Kinnock's attitude has shifted and he has now turned full circle on Europe.

When Nigel Lawson was urging Thatcher to join the European exchange rate mechanism, Kinnock warned against the dangers of British chancellors losing control of fiscal policy if Britain was in it. Then he changed his tune again, openly advocating our joining the ERM only days before the Government actually joined it.

Recently Kinnock, a favourite at the enormous lunches thrown by the generous European lobby, has thrown all his former caution to the wind and started advocating the closest possible ties with Europe, even full integration.

Now the opinion polls have swung a little the other way, expect the Windbag to blow cool on Europe and regain some of his early passion for British independence.

NEIL KINNOCK could face embarrassment in the next general election back home in his Islwyn constituency in Gwent.

Thanks to the local council's penchant for pock-marking the valleys with quarries, dumps, tips and extraction sites, the coaldust-ravaged locals have bravely decided to stand a Stop Tipping, Quarrying and Dumping candidate against the Welsh Windbag at the next election.

Concern is focused on the Risca area of the constituency, Kinnochio's spiritual heartland, currently awash with petitions, public meetings, demonstrations and letters to the local papers deriding the borough leaders for planning further environmental damage.

But what soul will be foolish enough to make a protest stand against Neil? So far, approaches have been made to several of the ambitious rebel Labour governors on the local Cwmcarn grant-maintained school, the first in Wales to opt-out last year, much to Kinnock's chagrin. Bets are now being taken on whether Kinnock can become the first party leader to lose his seat at the polls since his mentor, Ramsay MacDonald, lost Seaham as prime minister in 1935.

AS A GENERAL election looms, several Labour candidates are still not in place even though local parties have had nearly five years to pick someone. Nowhere is the "oversight" more marked than in the Murkeyside constituency of Wallasey — the fourth most marginal Tory seat in the country — held by foreign minister Linda Chalker.

Chalker's 6,000-plus majority was slashed to 279 last time by Labour's Lol Duffy, and Wallasey Labourites want him to stand against her again. Unfortunately, his Spartist past now puts him beyond the pale with the new Man at Next-style Labour Party.

Duffer is still set in his old-fashioned ways doing untrendy things like leading an unemployment march to the Tory conference in Blackpool last month. His problems stem from the trials and tribulations of "flakey" Frank Field in neighbouring Birkenhead, who succeeded in rewriting the party rule book to state that reselection contests can take place as many times as possible until *he* emerges as the winner. He held on to his seat thanks to adulatory backing from hacks on "quality" newspapers like Hugo Young, whose support for the apparently saint-like Frank leaves Murkeysiders mystified.

Field used his difficulties to put the damper on Duffy, whom he loathes. Now, careerist party hacks are out to grab the seat for which Duffer did the legwork. Current north-west party organiser Eileen Murphin has continually delayed the Wallasey reselection in the hope that a general election will be declared prematurely, "forcing" Walworth Road to impose a candidate. Murphin is under the impression that it is she who must be imposed!

But coming after the much-criticised selection of Peter Kilfoyle for Walton, it is unlikely a second regional official will be favoured in such a way. Kinnock, with his predilection for "showbiz" types like Glenda Luvvie, has suggested Mike Groves for the seat — a member of the twee Spinners folk group.

MICHAEL HOWARD, employment secretary, has taken a giant step towards rehabilitation in his constituency in the wake of the Stena fiasco (*Eyes passim*).

He has opened a new job centre — a caravan situated in an unobtrusive corner of a car park in Hythe. The caravan will open from 10am to 2pm every other Friday.

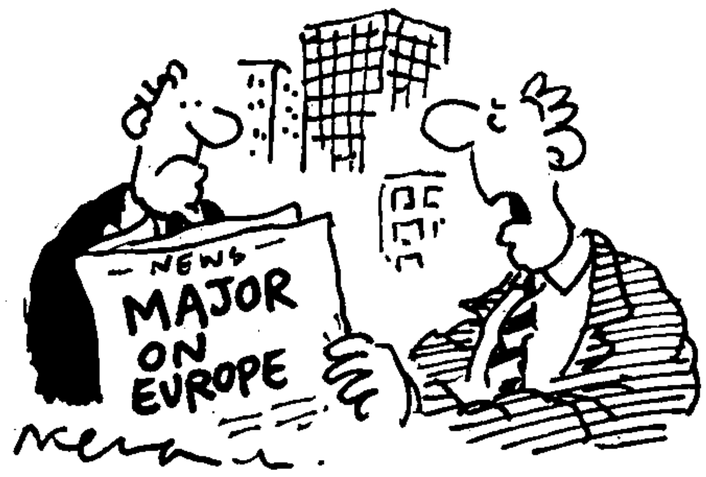
With great prescience, Howard rounded off his homily at the opening ceremony thus: "This will not, in itself, solve the town's unemployment problem."

ROGER KNAPMAN, ineffectual Tory MP for Stroud, appears to have "done a Humphrey" over plans to close Standish Hospital in his Gloucestershire constituency.

"Doing a Humphrey" is what happens when a Conservative MP (or a wannabe as in the case of Marcus Humphrey, who gave his name to the manoeuvre in the recent Kincardine by-election) suddenly dumps a tenet of Conservative Party policy because he knows it isn't going to win him votes.

Humphrey did it by opposing the fiercely contested opting-out of Aberdeen's Foresterhill Hospital. Knapman, following savage local health service cuts, and in some cases, abolition of such essentials as geriatric medicine and maternity services, has now joined the campaign to "Save Standish Hospital".

While maintaining that government policy was to centralise acute service provision, Mr Knapman explained that "an exception to the general rule should be made". But what makes Standish different? Surely not the fact that Roger Knapman's reelection prospects are at stake!



"It's the dawn of a new er..."

IN PURSUIT of its new pre-election image as friend of the environment, the Government has allocated a full £150,000 to the study of photovoltaics, the conversion of sunlight into electricity.

Has the money been awarded to a brilliant but penniless research worker sitting alone in his attic, or perhaps to a university lecturer whose laboratory has the paint peeling from its walls because there is no money to spare for luxuries?

Neither. It is going to BP, which claims to be Britain's biggest industrial company with 118,000 staff. It practically owns the North Sea, and the Government handout will not even be a drop in the ocean on its megamillion balance sheet. Now, however, it wants to find a way of making a living when the oil runs out and is not too proud to beg.

THE pro-Michael Forsyth right-wing loony party faction of the Young Conservatives in Scotland have set the battle lines over devolution at their annual conference which opens in Perth this month.

YC chairman Roy Smith, who is also vice-chairman of the Kincardine and Deeside party association, has written to Andrew Barnett, vice-chair of the pro-devolutionary and wet Scottish Tory Reform Group, advising him that his presence is not wanted.

The young Barnett is the party's candidate in the no-chance Glasgow Labour stronghold of Springburn, and Smith has told him: "You are not welcome. We simply don't want you here — we don't need people here who are going to stir things up."

Last year's conference ended in uproar as pro and anti Forsyth factions engaged in high-spirited fisticuffs, and sources at the party's new Scottish headquarters in proletarian Leith said that Lord Wallpaper, the party chairman, does not want a repeat of last year's bust-up so close to a general election.

THE Campaign Group of Labour MPs is widely regarded by the Daves and Deirdres of the Labour movement as the last bastion of True Socialism — not for them the red spectacles and filofaxes of Kinnochio's new-look People's Party.

Imagine the consternation, then, when at a recent Campaign Group meeting planning for the revolution was interrupted by the bleeping of a mobile telephone, the ultimate symbol of the oppressive capitalist overclass.

The Sparts were deeply shocked to hear Comrade Tony Benn, the former Viscount Spartsgate, take the call and then complain loudly: "Why should the devil have all the best technology?"

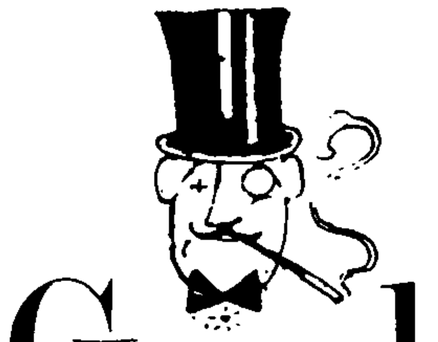
'Backbiter'

Mr Noel Botham

TERMS OF settlement have been agreed in a libel action brought by Mr Noel Botham against the *Eye* over an article in the *Eye* which suggested that Mr Botham had accepted a gross overpayment from an employee of the *Sunday Mirror* for a story and in return would pay the employee a substantial reward.

The *Eye* accepts that the suggestion was unfounded. *Private Eye* did not intend to suggest that Mr Botham had been guilty of any fraudulent or any dishonest conduct and accepts that any such suggestion would also have been unfounded.

The *Eye* offers it apologies to Mr Botham and has agreed to pay him an agreed sum in damages and costs.



Grovel

ON THE MORNING after Cap'n Bob's watery demise, the *Daily Mail* carried an editorial on the great man. "He will be missed," it concluded, "both by his admirers and by those who loved to hate him."

This differed slightly from what the leader-writer actually wrote, which was that Maxwell would be missed both "by his friends" and by those who loved to hate him. The change was made at the insistence of *Mail* editor Sir David Fester. "Maxwell," he explained to his hacks, "didn't have any friends."

MARY Whitehouse has started libel proceedings against the BBC over a discussion between Ned Twinky, Victoria Mather and A. N. Wilson that was broadcast on *Loose Ends* in May this year.

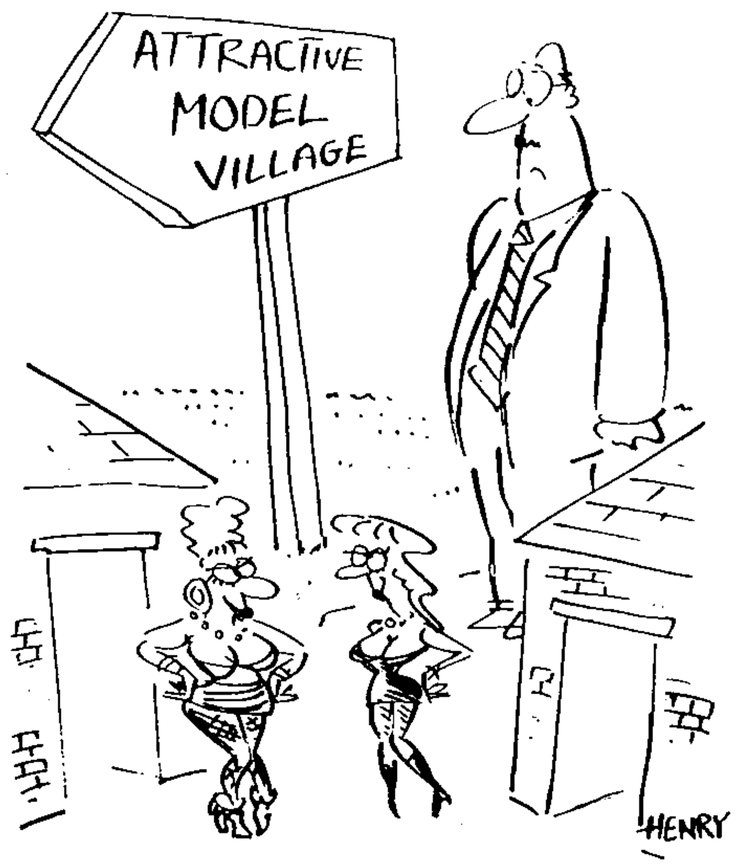
Her statement of claim alleges that the programme said she was "a wicked and vicious woman who considers herself entitled to and does behave as foully and cruelly as she likes, and that she deliberately sets out to whip up feelings of hatred against other people".

Better still, the statement of claim includes a demand for aggravated damages on the grounds that the BBC had put out a comedy series called *The Mary Whitehouse Experience*, "without her consent and with the intention of ridiculing her".

According to the minutes of a recent "editorial policy meeting", attended by BBC editors and the corporation's lawyer, the case is "particularly tricky".

I AM appalled by the behaviour of Peter Carter-Fuck, the avaricious libel solicitor whose letter of condolence to Ian Maxwell must be one of the most obsequious on record.

In it, Carter-Fuck quotes bizarrely from John Donne — "And never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee". I only hope that this quotation is not a lament for Carter-Fuck himself and his potential loss of earnings now that the ultra litigious Cap'n Bob is elbowing his way to the front of the queue to grant the Messiah an audience.



Pseuds Corner

When I travel by air, I just take a carry-on suitcase. If one of my hippeastrums from the greenhouse is about to bloom, I'll cut it off, put it into an airtight plastic bag in my attaché case and transport it to my hotel room in New York, Tokyo or wherever I am going. I think it is very stylish to arrive with my own flowers.

DAVID HICKS
Sunday Times

"Plato? I came to Plato before I was born. I discovered that other people had also discovered Plato later. But I realised this was the ultimate question mark. I became a Catholic, if that's of any interest at all. I shall die a Catholic. I am a bad Catholic."

"But a convinced one," I nudged.

"The hound of heaven pursues me, Chris. I go to Lourdes every year and have recourse to the Blessed Mother at the Grotto. I went there this present year, my 59th year, to tell the Blessed Mother that I was an atheist, I did not believe in God, and made a novena of baths, of masses, of Holy Communion, and spent a lot of time at night at the holy grotto talking to the Blessed Mother — this is really what my music is about."

MALCOLM WILLIAMSON
(Master of the Queen's Music), interviewed by Chris de Souza
Musical Times

Dubrovnik is where Slavs, Dalmatians, Latins and Greeks once met on the Stradone. As an undergraduate I shuffled along that street in 1960 for tickets for a performance of Hamlet in Serbo-Croat (Brahms in the Rector's Palace didn't sound so bright). I chatted up my young French neighbour and dared ask her name — "La Princesse Yusupov". I asked her if she was the daughter or grand-daughter of Rasputin's murderer. She replied: "Non. C'est mon mari, et il s'approche." A gentleman in a panama hat duly approached; we shook hands. Dubrovnik is like that.

ANTHONY BRYER
Guardian

When one has spent night after night acting before a live audience, an instinct is born that is never lost: I cannot now construct a scene or write a line without knowing exactly what effect it will have on the audience — not just laughter and tears, but all the infinite, silent fluctuations that an audience goes through, sitting out there, just glimpsed in the dark.

IAN CURTEIS
Guardian

For the Pixies are literally *infantile* — polymorphous, egotistical, terminally de-centred, demanding, absorbing and resistant. Amongst pop's flux and flights of (in)fancy, the Pixies emerge victorious and hungry — triumphant on the battle-ground of World Warhol 2. Trick the world, the sound of the demi-monde, a record that could have been brilliant, yet somehow *is*.

GRAHAM CAVENEY
City Limits

CONTRIBUTORS: Sarah Witt, Simon Hudson, Charlie Hill, Simon Burke, Jonathan Coe.

£10 paid for entries

THE DEMISE of Cap'n Bob leaves me in the happy position of being able to report a bizarre incident took place in 1968 during a BOAC Super VC 10 flight from New York to London, which conveys something of Maxwell's inimitable charm.

The stewardess serving in the first-class compartment wrote to me some time ago, describing her experiences.

After the meal had been served and the lights turned down, "Robert Maxwell proceeded to press the call-bell on an average every half an hour. If the steward answered the call, Robert Maxwell told him to go away and send me out. Each time there was an inane question. For example: 'Where are we?' — 'Over the Atlantic sir.' — 'I want to know exactly where!' This necessitated a trip to the flight deck, interrupring the navigator's well-deserved meal and procuring our exact whereabouts...

"In the morning, breakfast served, Robert Maxwell demanded every newspaper we had. Having read them he tore them up and tossed them over his head — he was sitting in the last row of first class. He used the lavatory and a little later I had cause to go in and check it. The idiot man had tossed Yardley's Men's peach-coloured talcum powder, along with water and torn-up lavatory paper all over — it was even on the ceiling. His intentions were to make my life hell, there was no doubt about that, he was incredibly rude and obnoxious, but only to me."

ASIDE FROM his humiliation at the hands of international conman Joe Flynn, I have reason to believe that all this cloak-and-dagger stuff arising from Seymour Hersh's *The Samson Option* is causing my old friend Matthew Evans, chairman of Faber & Faber, to lose his marbles.

He tells me his name is to be found on a Mossad hitlist, along with those of Robert Maxwell and Ari Ben-Menashe (the former Israeli intelligence operative).

● *IT SEEMS that considerable journalistic endeavour is being invested by Murdoch hacks into the private life of trade minister Peter Lilley. Why this should be is a mystery to me. Are there no* Labour *MPs left to turn over?*

POOR Greville Janner QC, the Labour MP whose name keeps cropping up in a child abuse trial in his Leicester West constituency.

While Mr Janner has denied allegations made about him, the press and electronic media continue to repeat them.

I advise him to read an excellent article penned in *Accountancy* magazine last year under the apposite heading: A GOOD PRESS AND HOW TO GET IT. In it the author opines: "Those who suffer at the hands of newspapers can usually only blame themselves." The author was none other than the chairman of Effective Presentation Skills — one Greville Janner.

● *AS IF visiting Birmingham were not bad enough, I am dragged kicking and screaming to the city's university to hear Cecil Parkinson "speak".*

Sadly, he gives a repeat performance of his Guernsey speech (Grovel, EYE *779) where, as a guest, he ignored the chosen topic, Europe, to boast of his and the Thatcher cabinet's endless achievements.*

Asked to talk to Birmingham's students about The Conservative Way Forward, Cecil's vision of the future is somewhat at odds with the rest of the party: it does not evidently include John Major or any of the present government, none of whom was mentioned once in a diatribe that again deified the Thatcher cabinet (including one C. Parkinson).

The time has clearly come for Cecil to spend more time with his families...

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

I MUST return to tediously familiar territory — always necessary when people are arrogant enough not to take my advice.

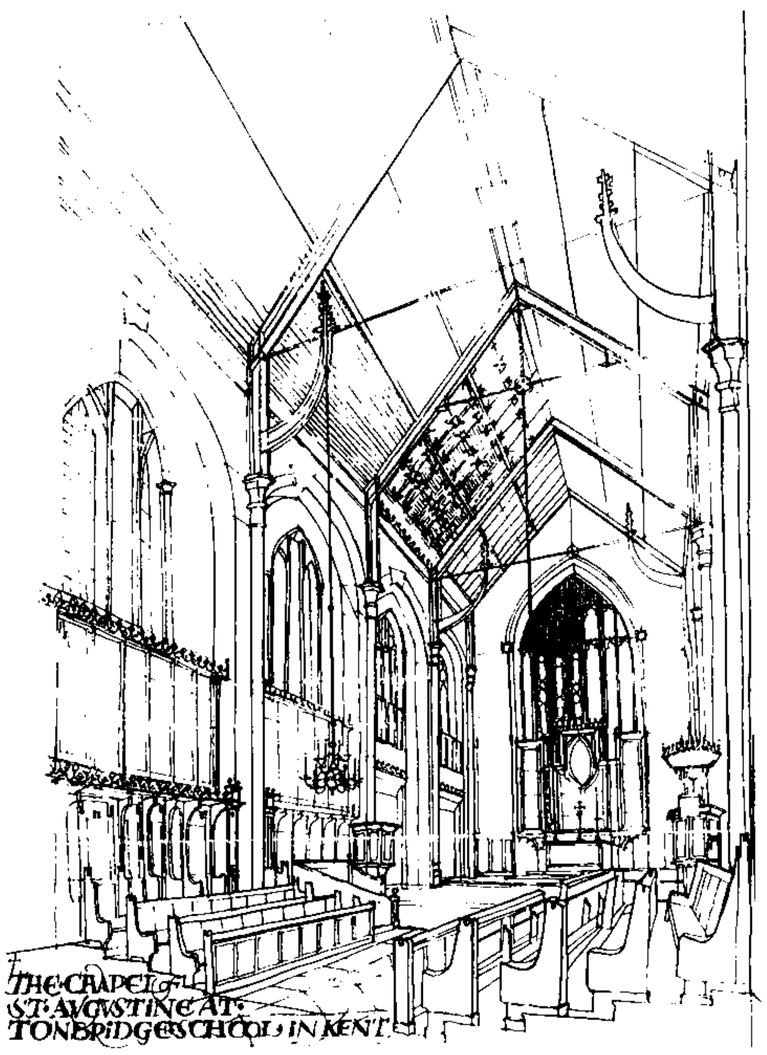
The governors of Tonbridge School, for instance, are incorrigible. Although in the last *Eye* I told them to swallow their pride and get on with restoring their fine burned-out Edwardian school chapel, they are still determined to go ahead with the destructive, insensitive, ugly and expensive rebuilding scheme by Donald Buttress. To this end, the collection of smoothies and freemasons connected with the Skinners' Company has come up with two artful ploys.

One is to get the chapel "de-listed" on the grounds that it is so badly damaged. The governors proposed this to the Department of the Environment last month, but, fortunately, the DoE will not consider this while a listed building consent application is before the local authority.

Even without that, I cannot see how this cynical request could possibly be entertained, for to acquiesce in the de-listing of an historic building on the grounds of extensive fire damage would merely be an arsonist's charter and would undermine the whole point of listing in the first place. But what is curious in this case is that the chief planning officer of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council replied that his council had "no views" on de-listing without consulting his planning committee. Did he consult the Skinners' Company, I wonder?

The second, even more desperate ploy is to have the chapel somehow conveyed to the jurisdiction of the diocese of Rochester. This would mean that internal alterations would not need planning permission as they would merely be covered by the Church of England's own "faculty jurisdiction". This is a nonsense as a school chapel is not an ordinary place of worship that enjoys "ecclesiastical exemption" from planning law.

But why are the governors so very determined to proceed with bearded Donald's awful scheme? Can it just be for fear of loss of face? One interesting theory is that the new headmaster knows perfectly well that Buttress is a busted flush and hopes that, when the Buttress scheme founders, as it must, the result will be that the building will be demolished rather than restored properly. And that will mean the money can be spent instead on a bright whizzy new computer technology centre, or whatever. Watch this space.



THE CHAPEL OF ST AUGUSTINE AT TONBRIDGE SCHOOL IN KENT

OVER at Heveningham Hall** (Eyes passim), **the situation remains unresolved. A report by SAVE Britain's Heritage sensibly urges the Government to buy back the house for the nation before the deadline of 11 December. But that, of course, would mean loss of face for Mr Heseltine, for it was he, in his earlier incarnation as Secretary of State for the Environment in 1981, who sold it to the disastrous Mr Al Ghazzi. SAVE rightly observes that Heveningham is not really suitable as a private house and that any individual who bought it would probably want to make the grounds into a golf course.

Meanwhile, the curious reluctance of Sir Ian Gilmour and other prominent Conservatives to admit that anything went wrong with Mr Al Ghazzi's company's stewardship of Heveningham remains unexplained. In this context, I find a report on the state of Heveningham Park by an inspector, one J.L. Phibbs, for consideration by English Heritage at a meeting on 4 October 1990, rather interesting, for it concludes that: "I must add that the owners are Iraqi. If they value Heveningham, the committee should press the Government to avoid any hostile action against that country until the current improvements have been completed." Does this astonishing statement mean that buttering up Mr Al Ghazzi was considered, in certain circles, even more important than defending the interests of oil-rich Kuwaitis?

The Islamicisation of Britain is certainly a curious process. Thinking of golf courses at Heveningham immediately recalls poor Burley-on-the-Hill, now in the hands of Mr Ramadan Guney** (Eyes passim). **Mr Guney is head of the Anglo-Turkish Islamic Trust, and his company, as I have noted before, now owns Brookwood Cemetery. This company's stewardship of that once-fine Victorian cemetery is such that the family of Sir Thomas Beecham has dug up the poor old boy and reburied him in the churchyard at Limpsfield, where he has the consolation of being next to Delius. There is no such consolation for those who are left at Brookwood.

But perhaps someone like Mr Guney is the answer to the Skinners' Company's dilemma? All Tonbridge School need do is sell the chapel to someone who wants to convert it into a mosque and then there will be no trouble at all with the Department of the Environment. And I am sure the genius of Donald Buttress is quite up to producing a passable minaret.

'Piloti'

Sally Deedes

QUESTION: How do post office managers keep within their targets for "maximum customer queuing time" when they don't have enough staff? ANSWER: They fiddle the figures.

For example, at one busy London post office peak-time users regularly join a queue that stretches out through the door and along the street. The time they have to wait would make it impossible for the post office manager to meet his official targets — 95 percent of customers are supposed to be served in under five minutes — unless, of course, he were to calculate the customer's wait from the time they got in through the door, not the time they spent waiting on the pavement outside.

Naturally, as this goes against regulations it never happens, even though enormous pressure is applied to post office managers to meet targets with inadequate resources.

I wonder where else isn't it happening?

A FORTNIGHT ago, the 8.15pm from King's Cross to Cambridge left King's Cross on time — gasp! — only to develop an electrical fault between Finsbury Park and Hatfield.

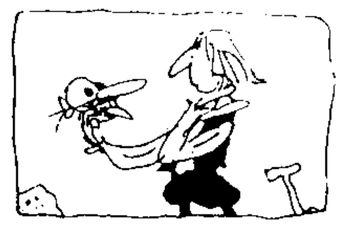
The passengers, including two senior British Rail executives sitting in one of the train's first-class compartments, were all cast into darkness and locked in: the doors were connected to the same electrical system as the lights and could not be opened.

The train stood immobile for an hour, the passengers growing colder and colder, until another train came along to shunt them on their way. The rescue train then also went wrong. A third train finally pushed them as far as Welwyn, where the doors were opened from outside. Passengers were left to wander the platform, which had no seats, or sit in the tiny waiting room which was even colder than the platform.

One passenger, a Mrs Miller, who is in her sixties, feared for her safety as a diabetic — cold isn't exactly good for her — and took the first train that came along. It went to Royston. Mrs Miller sat there until a train finally arrived to take her on to Cambridge. The journey which usually takes one hour and ten minutes took three and a half hours.

When Mrs Miller telephoned British Rail at King's Cross to complain, the spokeswoman who took her call revealed that some of the disgruntled passengers on the London to Cambridge line — which has just had £3 million spent on it — had taken taxis to complete their journeys. The BR spokeswoman knew this because she had their taxi bills in front of her!

It didn't take Mrs Miller long to work out which passengers from which first-class compartment had finished their journey by car and were asking BR to stump up the fare.



LUVVIES

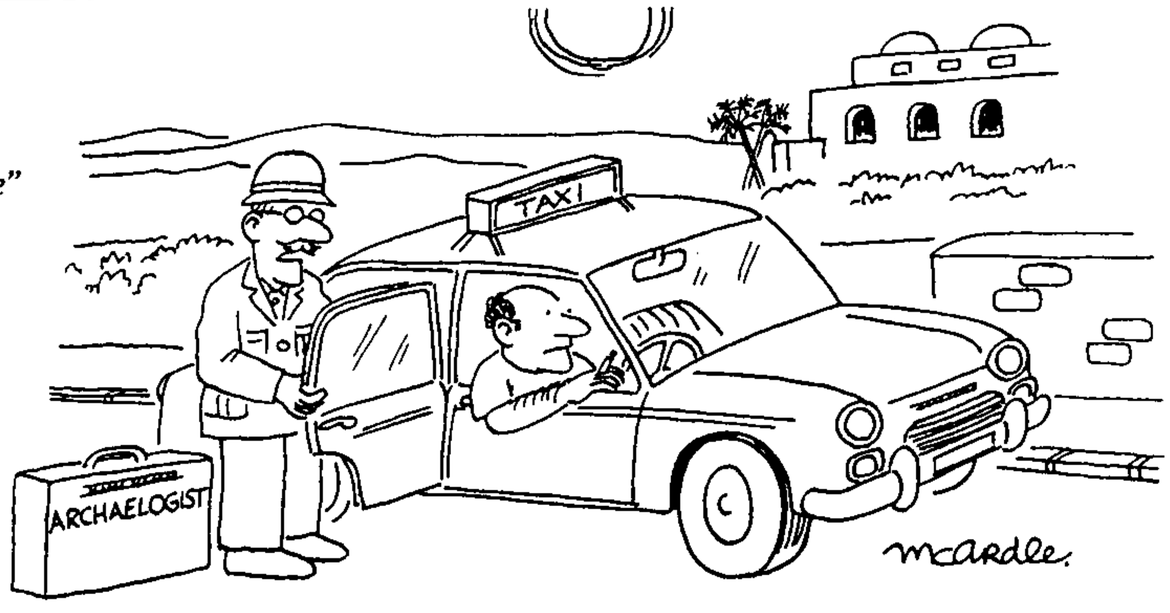
"The iambic couplets force a fleet felicity," he says of the script's electric tempo. "You've got to be fast with this text or it falls down. If you try to naturalise it, you're dead. You must do it Moliere's way or it'll bite you in the arse."

JOHN SESSIONS
(on his role as Tartuffe)
Midweek

Submitted by Richard Hay

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 for contributions.

"Quick, drive me into an early grave"



Biteback

(BBC1)

QUESTION: How many BBC executives does it take to change a light-bulb? Answer: An internal inquiry has shown that there's nothing wrong with the light-bulb. Question: But we're sitting here in the bloody dark. Answer: We're very sorry if some viewers complained of lack of illumination. However, it was not our intention to restrict anyone's vision and it should be remembered that the vast majority of those sitting in the room have not complained.

All of the BBC's "public access" or "complaints" slots have been a bit like that. Anne Robinson's *Points of View*, in which those who have the effrontery to criticise the output have their letters read out in cretin and prig voices, is typical. *Biteback*, the latest groan show, continues the grim tradition. Fronted by Julian Pettifer, it is supposedly the corporation's latest answer to *Right to Reply*, the still commendable Channel 4 tube-abuse series.

However, several factors suggest that a direct comparison should not be allowed. Firstly, unlike the weekly Channel 4 format, the BBC version is monthly — a giveaway acknowledgement of how seriously the corporation takes criticism. Secondly, how very odd that the newly-returned *Did You See?*, in which programmes from all channels are criticised by non-television types, is hosted by the hostile Jeremy Paxman, while *Biteback*, in which BBC producers are tackled, is fronted by the pussycat, pussyfooting Julian Pettifer. Why wasn't Paxman let loose on the producers? Thirdly, readers may remember that the last edition of *Did You See?*, the annual BBC complaints snow-job, included an "independent analysis" of the corporation by (yes) Julian Pettifer. Presumably his favourable report impressed so much that he was rewarded with this contract. Finally, the "independent" company producing *Biteback* is Barraclough Carey, set up by old BBC hands George Carey and Jenny Barraclough.

Having, in these ways, set up the programme with a kind of broadcasting equivalent of safe sex, the corporation takes further precautions during the encounters. The first guests invited into the "Hot Seat", facing a live studio audience, are Polly Toynbee and Mark Damazer of the *Nine O'Clock News*. Pettifer invites a "warm round of applause" for them, thus revealing once again the attitude that viewers should be grateful to the producers for deigning to take questions.

The studio has been filled with political partisans, like a *Question Time* audience on speed, who howl about the alleged left-wing bias of the BBC. They froth and spit about a "conspiracy". Toynbee and Damazer try to make the reasonable, if inevitable, point that no one deeply involved in politics will ever judge a report fair.

Toynbee and Damazer are shocked at the incoherent hostility they face. They need not, however, worry. The view-zoo format, loved by *Kilroy*, has the effect of suggesting that those who question the BBC's decisions are virtually certifiable. How interesting that the corporation chose to avoid the *Right To Reply* set-up, in which one or two cogent and prepared members of the public pin-down the producer.

Other sections of the programme display the BBC's traditional light-bulb joke response to complaint. The "Biteback Hit List" is a quick idiot's version of *Points of View*, in which an extract from a letter or phone call is put to a BBC suit. A *Wogan* spokesman insists: "We are sure Selina [Scott] meant no offence to Bryan Adams..." A *One O'Clock News* representative protests that a tough interview with the recently bereaved Kevin Maxwell was "not intended to give offence". We are asked to remember that it was "a live interview".

The rest of the first show was given over to allowing special interest groups to complain about drama series featuring their special interests. A number of epileptics had been troubled by an episode of *Casualty* featuring a fit; a clutch of special constables felt that *Specials* failed to treat their calling with the appropriate solemnity. Given that those closest to a subject will inevitably find dramatisation of it shallow and unfair, you wondered if *Biteback* was not utilising another cunning way of neutralising dissent: isolating the bleats as special pleading.

Until *Biteback* is weekly, one-to-one and dealing in the wider moral aspects of the medium (intrusion, expense, quality), rather than fanatics defending their fanaticism, the BBC cannot claim to take criticism seriously. A common executive defence of errors, outside television, is "we are just flawed human beings". The BBC's attitude to complainants is, rather less commendably: "You are just flawed human beings".

'Square Eyes'

I-BSkyB

Tracey: Do you like Chanel No. 5?
Sharon: Nah. I only watch Sky-One.

"Essex Girl" joke in the Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Mark Haworth

MEDIA NEWS

WHICH company making a loss of nearly £5 million a week is being plugged by the *Financial Times*? None other than ghastly British Sky Broadcasting, the dish people.

The gung-ho articles always take care to note, if one looks hard enough, that a major shareholder is Pearson, publisher of the *FT*. The latest article (and similar reports in the same paper) is by the incorruptible Ray Snoddy and declares: "That Mr Gary Davey, deputy managing director, should be considering commissioning a multi-million-pound soap from a UK independent production company is a small symbol of the transformation in the atmosphere and prospects."

Snoddy has a tactful way of describing the company's finances: "Weekly losses have been reduced to £1.8 million although this figure rises to £4.8 million a week when financing charges are included." It'll be a strange day when the *FT* discusses a company's finances and *excludes* its interest on debts.

HISTORY has been made with the first-ever complaint to Lord Rees-Mogg's absurd Broadcasting Standards Council about a party political broadcast.

Several viewers, it seems, have lodged protests at the "tasteless use of 'The Last Post'..." in the Tories' PPB on 19 September.

The council, as is its usual procedure with complaints about material broadcast by the BBC, has asked the corporation to provide a statement answering the criticism: even though the BBC had nothing to do with the making of the film, it turns out to be liable as broadcaster.

This raises the entertaining prospect that the Beeb, already under fire from Chris Patten for its alleged anti-Tory output, may shortly be obliged to carry a solemn statement apologising for the tastelessness of the Conservative Party.

WATCHING ITV's rugby world cup coverage in a hotel room last month, one *Eye* reader from Kent was daft enough to enter the "Try of the Week" competition in the hope of winning tickets for the final.

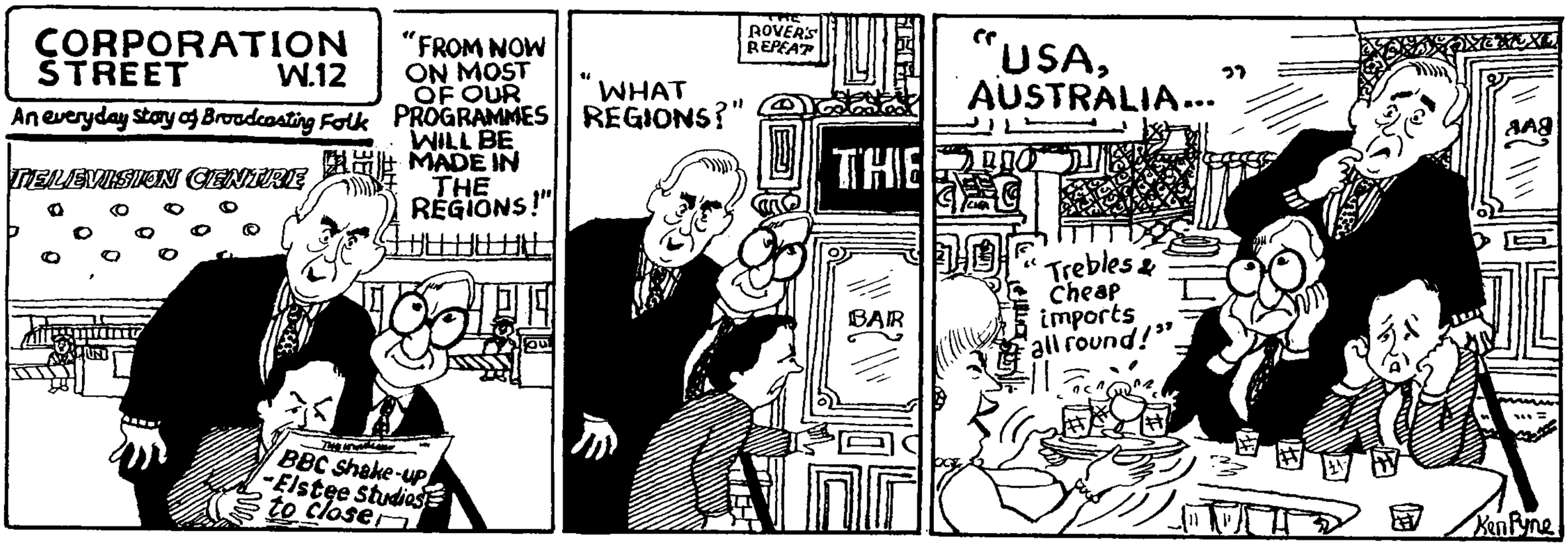
He rang the 0898- number given and was dismayed to hear the recorded voice of Frank Bough giving totally useless information on, among other things, the competition's judges. After about two and a half minutes our reader was able to register his vote, along with his name and address.

When checking out of the hotel the next morning, his telephone bill showed that listening to Snow White had cost him £3.99

The receptionist was most sympathetic and said her son had run up a horrendous bill during the football world cup entering similar competitions. It seems the main winners are ITV and British Telecom.

ANOTHER four experienced producers have joined the great exodus from the BBC since the unequal opportunities regime (see *Eye* 779) took over at Radio Three and are now spending more time with their wives and/or families.

The ruling Radio 3 triumvirate are all fortunate in not having wives or families to go home to.



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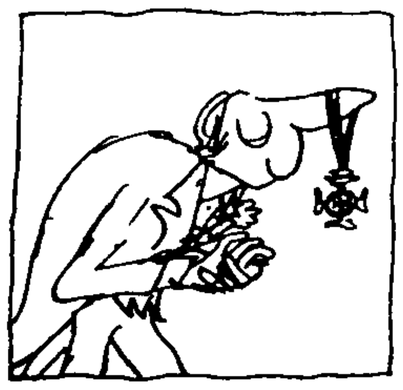


"I think he had more physical and moral courage than anyone I have ever met" — **Peter Jay, Today.**

"The man who saved the Daily Mirror" — **Daily Mirror headline.**

"We didn't meet often. But on each occasion he left me reeling from his charm, his amazing panache — and the sheer speed at which his brain worked" — **Anne Robinson, Daily Mirror.**

"Mr Maxwell was not a man but an empire in his power, thought and deeds. I can't believe that even the sea could overcome him" — **Shimon Peres, leader of Israeli Labour Party.**

"This is a great loss for Britain, France and Europe... He was exceptional, with a great intellect and a very warm heart" — **Jack Lang, French Culture Minister.**

"He was a steadfast supporter of the Labour Party and a man with a genuine commitment to the advancement of the British people" — **Neil Kinnock.**

"He commanded great affection from some of those who lived and worked with him... the length of his journey from the place and circumstances of his birth demand respect from all of us who have had to travel much less far, to rise much less high" — **Max Hastings, Daily Telegraph.**

"He just enriched my life. He was my inspiration and my hero" — **Anne Robinson, The Times.**

"A great deal has been written about how Robert Maxwell saved the Mirror Group papers. Not enough has been written about his commitment to Labour. Whatever those who fought for his expulsion may have thought, that commitment was unshakeable" — **Alastair Campbell, Sunday Mirror.**

"She comes to bury her Colossus — and to praise him. Today Betty Maxwell, a dignified and sombre figure in widow's black, puts her husband to rest... The air is chill, as if cooled by the icy dread she felt when she heard Robert Maxwell was missing" — **Gill Martin, Sunday Mirror.**

"The publisher's final resting place is high on the hillside... It was from the Mount of Olives, according to Christian belief, that Jesus ascended into heaven after his resurrection" — **John Jackson and Harry Arnold, The People.**

"Robert Maxwell's premature death is a great loss to the world of business and publishing. He was the one man you could rely on in times of trouble" — **Lord Stevens of Ludgate, Daily Express.**

"He was different from others and he allowed others to be different from him. In those waters he lost his breath but not his soul. It will float above the waves as a marker to those who believe that a man can be bigger than the cards he was dealt. Here, on the Mount of Olives, eternity will absorb one of its greatest sons. He deserves not only freedom but rest" — **Shimon Peres, Leader of the Israeli Labour Party.**

"From the streets of Jerusalem, well-wishers flocked in — some in business suits, some in cardigans and anoraks. Robert Maxwell would have welcomed them as his wife did, because behind the glittering career — the yacht, the Rolls-Royces, the gloss and glory and affluence — lay his unswerving crusade to better the lot of the ordinary man" — **Mary Riddell, Daily Mirror.**

"A man who worked and aspired and achieved dreams unthinkable to the ordinary mortal" — **Mary Riddell, Daily Mirror.**

"In an interview with the Hebrew daily *Maariv*, owned by the Maxwell family, the publisher's widow expressed her gratitude to the Israelis: 'Thank you for loving him' " — **Daily Telegraph.**

"He scaled the heights. Kings and barons besieged his doorstep" — **President Chaim Herzog of Israel.**

"The children of Chernobyl paid their own special tribute to Robert Maxwell at his funeral yesterday. Fifty of them — some close to tears — filed solemnly past the family of the man they believe saved their lives" — **Daily Mirror.**

"Both at front of stage and behind the scenes, Maxwell helped in large part to shape the Europe in which we live" — **The European.**

"Many who started off disliking him ended up captured by his kindness" — **Joe Haines, Daily Mirror.**

"The death of Robert Maxwell continues to be talked about and discussed wherever I go. And thank you to all those readers who have written to me expressing their sorrow. In the past week, I've begun to appreciate how sensible is the idea of formal mourning" — **Anne Robinson, Daily Mirror.**

"As a tribute to the late Robert Maxwell, and to recognise his immense work for a united Europe, the uninspiring ECU should be renamed The Bob. His memory will live on long after those anti-European squabblers who are trading Britain short are forgotten. C. Rossini, Dovercourt" — **letter in Today.**

"I am a reader of both the *European* and the *Mirror* and was devastated by the news of Robert Maxwell's death. His contribution to a socially united Europe could not have been greater. He will be remembered long after Mr Major's squabbling pygmies are dumped in the dustbin of history. C. Rossini, Harwich, Essex" — **letter in Daily Mirror.**

"We are all saddened by the death of Captain Bob but his ship must not be allowed to founder. The King is dead. Long live the King of newspapers, the great and only *Daily Mirror*" —**letter in Daily Mirror.**

"Robert Maxwell will be remembered for his compassion" —**letter in Daily Mirror.**

"He was... a liar, a cheat and a bully" – **Independent on Sunday** *(Shurely shome mishtake? Ed)*

LEST WE FORGET... Part 94

MOST reports on Maxwell's life mentioned the notorious DTI report into the Pergamon-Leasco affair. Leasco was the company owned by the US entrepreneur Saul Steinberg, who had been discussing a possible takeover of Cap'n Bob's Pergamon when he and his advisers noticed peculiarities in the books.

This prompted the Takeover Panel to call in the DTI. It also prompted Steinberg's company to sue the Maxwell family and his merchant bankers, Robert Fleming, in the US courts. Steinberg later took over Reliance, a US insurance group, and the litigation continued under its auspices.

In July 1974 the *New York Times* announced that Robert Fleming and the Maxwell family (Cap'n Bob had been hiding behind his family trusts throughout) had agreed to pay Reliance $6.25 million in settlement of a civil fraud action. Maxwell lied time and again about Pergamon-Leasco, claiming he had been cleared of all charges made by the DTI inspectors in a court of law.

IN 1976 Cap'n Bob "rescued" the *Scottish Daily News*, a workers' cooperative set up to carry on publishing the *Scottish Daily Express* after Beaverbrook Newspapers pulled the plug. It was Maxwell's first attempt at running a newspaper — he soon commandeered the operation — and ended in failure.

Once again, as with Pergamon, his domineering approach spelled ruin. When asked at a press conference whether it was true that according to his own internal memorandum the company had a deficit of £17,000, he responded that "we are very solvent, we have no financial problems". In fact, he had admitted to staff that the paper needed an injection of £250,000 to survive.

CAP'N BOB'S *Daily Mirror* claimed to have saved the 1986 Commonwealth Games in a typically tendentious front-page headline. Although the *Mirror* did put in some money, it later emerged that Maxwell was not prepared to fund all the liabilities. The Games company was later found to be hopelessly insolvent and many creditors resented the false impression of solvency that had been given when Maxwell first trumpeted his involvement.

As one director of the company told *The Times*, [Maxwell] had continued "running up debts when many directors felt legally obliged to liquidate the company".

WHEN Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, Cap'n Bob went round the newly liberated countries presenting himself as freedom's friend and sucking up to the new rulers. He hoped — with some success — they would forget how shamelessly he had fawned over their mass-murdering predecessors.

"What has, in your opinion, made you so popular with the Romanian people?" Maxwell asked Nicolae Ceausescu in an interview at the end of *Ceausescu: Builder of Modern Romania and International Statesman*, published in Pergamon Press's series on "World Leaders" (general editor: R. Maxwell).

In his foreword to a Pergamon hagiography of Gustav Husak, he praised the Czech dictator — who jailed Vaclav Havel — as "this impressive man" who "has brought stability and economic progress to his country". He published the speeches of General Jaruzelski and condemned Solidarity. Most favoured of all was Todor Zhivkov, the brutal Bulgarian despot — or, as Maxwell preferred to put it, *Todor Zhivkov: Statesman and Builder of Modern Bulgaria.*

MAXWELL was a compulsive liar. He was so used to being surrounded by cringing yes-men that he came to believe he could say anything — however fantastic — without being challenged.

Thus in an interview with the *Independent on Sunday* last year he announced that he had done no business of any kind in Eastern Europe "before the fall of the Berlin Wall" — even though his Pergamon empire had for years been flogging Soviet scientific papers at inflated prices, and even though his own *Daily Mirror* had boasted five years earlier of Cap'n Bob's "huge deal with the Bulgarian government" to modernise the country's printing and packaging industries.

(*That's enough. Ed.*]

Lockerbie Special Report

"DOES George Bush take us for fools?" The question was asked on 14 November by Bonnie O'Connor of Long Island, USA, whose brother died on the doomed Pan Am jumbo that exploded and crashed over Lockerbie two years ago.

Bonnie O'Connor was responding to the news, carefully synchronised by the US Justice Department and the Lord Advocate for Scotland, that two Libyan intelligence agents were responsible for the bomb.

There was no answer from the White House to Bonnie O'Connor's pertinent question, but in Britain the reaction to the naming of the two Libyans shows that President Bush certainly takes the Scottish police, the Lord Advocate, the Foreign Secretary, and, with one or two exceptions, the entire British press for blithering idiots — and that he is absolutely correct in that assessment.

Flashback to a small private dining room in the Garrick Club in March 1989, four months after the Lockerbie disaster, and a prestigious lunch hosted by a bunch of top political correspondents: Ian Aitken (*Guardian*), Julia Langdon (*Mirror*), Chris Buckland (*Today*), Robin Oakley (*Times*) and Geoffrey Parkhouse (*Glasgow Herald*). Their guest was mega-rich old Etonian transport minister Paul Channon. Channon told them off the record that Scottish police investigating the Lockerbie disaster had tracked down the terrorists responsible and that there would be arrests in a matter of days.

Channon went out of his way to praise the brilliant detective work of the Galloway police and the forensic wizards from British police laboratories. All this praise and good news duly appeared on the front pages of the newspapers who had been lucky enough to win such a scoop from a Garrick Club lunch.

To their chagrin, however, there were no immediate arrests. Instead, there were tactful denials that the terrorists had been tracked down. Then it was leaked that Channon himself had been the source of the apparently false information. Channon denied it, was exposed as a liar and, after a decent interval, sacked.

Working closely with MI5, MI6 and the Scottish police, over the next few months the newspapers continued to "expose" the terrorists responsible for the Lockerbie disaster. Leading the pack was the *Sunday Times* which, as its performance over the Gibraltar shootings the previous year had demonstrated, had replaced its previous commitment to investigative journalism with a new policy of printing without question any information supplied by the Ministry of Defence, MI5, MI6 or all three.

In a series of interminable articles starting in October 1989 and running up to the first anniversary of the disaster — 21 December — the *Sunday Times* set out the "full facts" about the bombing.

It had been devised, it said, by the Iranian government in revenge for the shooting down of an Iranian passenger airliner during the Iran-Iraq war by an American warship. The Iranians had hired a gang of extremist Palestinians, who had the protection of the Syrian government. The gang had made a bomb looking like a Toshiba cassette recorder and had planted it in a suitcase in Malta on a plane which went through Frankfurt. The gang had been very active in Germany and had carefully studied the security system at Frankfurt airport, where the ill-fated Pan-Am flight began.

All this was set out in the most meticulous detail. The leader of the Palestinian sect was named as Jibril. The leader of the Syrian-backed terrorist outfit was Nidal. Even the man who had been "identified" as travelling to Malta to buy the clothes to put in the bomb suitcase was named as Talb — a Palestinian terrorist then (and still) in prison in Sweden.

No journalist could have put together this story without the assistance of official investigators from the Scottish police, MI5, the CIA or the Ministry of Defence. This was the detail of the story which Paul Channon had so ineffectually leaked to the country's top political reporters the previous March. But still there was no action. How was it possible for so much to be known by the authorities, with so little sign of an arrest?

An answer came in the *Washington Post* of 11 January 1990 when Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta revealed that Margaret Thatcher and George Bush had spoken on the telephone in mid-March 1989, at almost the same time as Channon was blabbing to journalists in the Garrick Club. They agreed, the report revealed, to "low-key" the disaster, even though their intelligence networks had established that Jibril/Nidal/Talb were responsible for it.

The reason for this "low-key" approach (which was not passed on in time to the wretched Channon) was not clear. One plausible theory at the time was that the CIA was masterminding a drugs run through Frankfurt airport in exchange for promises by the Iranians to free hostages — an extension of the Irangate arms-for-hostages deal.

But the real reason may have had more to do with the generally shifting political scene in the Middle East. With the active help of the US, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq had taken the sting out of Iran, and, from the US point of view, was getting too big for its boots.

Later, as we are all painfully aware, this culminated in August 1990 with Saddam Hussein sending Iraqi troops into Kuwait, taking control of another 8 per cent of the world's oil production. As the *Eye* reported on 28 September:

One casualty of the Gulf crisis appears to be Mrs Thatcher's policy of No Dealing With Terrorists — particularly Syria. Military advisers have warned her that success in the Gulf depends very much on the friendship — or at worst the neutrality — of the Syrian government under its Saddam-style dictator, President Assad... Thatcher and Bush have already agreed that they will not pursue any further the terrorists who bombed the plane over Lockerbie since they are known to be close to the Syrian government. This new policy extends to Iran and the Lebanon and reached its climax on 11 September when the British Ambassador in Beirut met the spiritual leader of the terrorist organisation Hezbollah.

During the Gulf War, both American and British authorities were delighted by the support they got against the bestial and inhuman government of Saddam Hussein from the bestial and inhuman government of Syria. Assad became the dictator everyone (except the Syrian people) loved to praise. Ever since VI day, both American and British governments have founded the New World Order on the rock of cooperation with Assad, the moderate wing of the Palestinians and even the ayatollahs in Iran. This was the basis of the recent summit in Madrid and of the steady flow of released hostages in Beirut.

In recent weeks, Bush and Major have been under some pressure from the families of people who died at Lockerbie. One US group of families recently visited Britain and started to agitate for action. The statement about the two Libyans was the two governments' answer. The wretched Lord Fraser, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, was ordered to read out "results" of his police inquiry which were completely different from those already read out to newspapers all over the world, especially the *Sunday Times*.

In the House of Commons Douglas Hurd went out of his way to exculpate the "other governments" (Syria and Iran) which his colleague Paul Channon had denounced in March 1989. Like lazy and overfed fish, the British media jumped to the bait. In almost unanimous chorus, they engaged in furious vilification and open warmongering against Libya, drooling praise for the "plodding policeman" of Galloway, and almost total forgetfulness about those terrorists whom they themselves had exposed again and again for plotting the bombing. The *Sunday Times* (17 Nov) stated: "The position of Iran and Syria remains obscure". Obscurity, however, was the exact opposite of the 5-week exposé of "what really happened at Lockerbie" in the *Sunday Times* Oct-Dec 1989.

Press hysteria has had very little echo among the families of the Lockerbie dead. They remain incensed by the way they have been treated by the Government.

First, they were promised a public inquiry by the then transport minister Cecil Parkinson. Parkinson reneged on his pledge after being called to heel by Thatcher. Instead, the families got a fatal accident inquiry in Scotland. The inquiry report was unpredictably harsh about the Department of Transport's security arrangements at Heathrow. If luggage had been properly reconciled with passengers, it concluded, the Lockerbie disaster would never have taken place.

The families promptly demanded a full investigation into this charge. They insisted on a pledge that luggage and passengers would in future be reconciled. The Government refused to order the airlines to reconcile luggage with passengers. Then, on 14 November, the day of the announcement that two Libyans were responsible for the bombing, the secretary of the Lockerbie Families Association's got by hand a letter from the transport minister Malcolm Rifkind. On behalf of the Government it once more refused a public inquiry.

The position of the Government now is that it refuses to take the steps which an independent inquiry says are necessary to ensure the safety of airline passengers in future; it pins the responsibility for the disaster on two men never before named in the endless leaks and exposés about what happened at Lockerbie; and it exculpates other governments because they happen at the moment to be politically friendly. This has whipped up a fury against Libya which could develop into more air raids, more bloodshed, and, in revenge, more terrorist attacks on passenger aircraft.

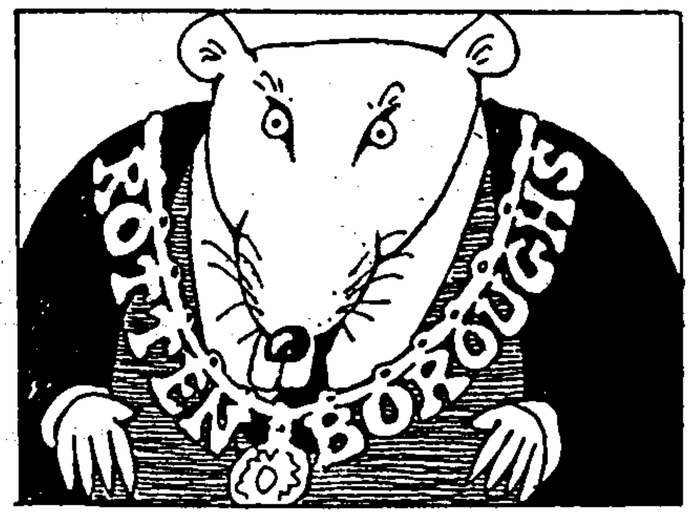
GULF NEWS

NOW THE world has got over the Gulf War, attention is turning to the behaviour of the Kuwaitis. The big question is: what are they really like?

An indication came last weekend when the residence permits for half the population of Kuwait were withdrawn. Even South Africa never denied its blacks a nationality, but that was the effect of the move by the Sabah family, which has refused half its population citizenship even though they and their ancestors were born in the country. Now their very right to live in their homeland is to be denied them. Palestinians, who actually did all the work while the Kuwaitis did all the casinos, are also affected.

In a recent UN report on human rights violations under Iraqi occupation, the UN rapporteur, Swiss Walter Kalin, was clearly shocked when he reported that "according to information provided by the Ministry of Justice approximately 1,000 individuals were omitted from the list because their cases were *no longer considered to be of concern* to the government of Kuwait. These cases include primarily: (i) stateless residents of Kuwait (bedouin) who had not been employed by the government of Kuwait; (ii) Jordanian citizens including those of Palestinian origin; and (iii) other Palestinians."

It's good to know the world went to war for such nice people.



BENT

THERE'S no end in sight to the turmoil that has gripped barmy Bent, Britain's rottenest borough, for most of this year.

With Inspector Knacker conducting no fewer than three major fraud inquiries in the mean streets north of Neasden (*Eyes passim*), hitherto undiscovered scandals keep coming to light.

A local housing association, Brent Community Housing, has joined the fray with allegations that it has been unwittingly used by third parties as a vehicle for "illegal sub-letting". BCH, which maintains houses Bent council can't afford to restore, found its unintentional complicity when town hall auditors made an uninvited visit, requesting officers to explain some "unusual circumstances".

Instead of shutting up shop, however, BCH has bravely come clean on some of the auditors' more sinister discoveries, especially those involving the local Bent African Women's Council. Although BCH now fears it could lose its council grant for speaking out, it alleges that:

- An officer from Bent African Women's Council referred herself as homeless to BCH using a false name. After obtaining housing offers from the association she pulled out of the deal.
- Bent African Women's Council referred people who were home-owners or tenants, claiming them to be single homeless.
- Neil Johnson, son of disgraced, Idi Amin-loving ex-housing chair, Nkechi Amalu-Johnson, was allocated a property after "material facts about his housing situation" had been concealed.

According to BCH "Brent African Women's Council exerted undue pressure on BCH staff... in order to obtain permanent housing for Neil Johnson through a housing association." In fact, Johnson received the housing association place, which had been designated for the needy, only nine weeks after being evicted from a Bent council house with £6,000 in arrears.

Another "scandal" which so far has not come to light involves assistant housing director, Peter O'Callaghan, who entered into a property leasing deal last year with another local housing association, Network. Not only was the deal kept secret from councillors, but there was no written agreement between Bent and Network!

The deal would have cost Bent £2.4m in lost subsidy from the Department of the Environment had the whistle not been blown and, according to the district auditor, there was an "absence of anyone taking overall responsibility for getting to the bottom of the problem". Unfortunately, council auditors could only find "patchy information" — pre-1988 files relating to the arrangement had conveniently been lost in an office move!

BERKSHIRE

ONCE-quaint Berkshire, which is littered with new housing estates, needs extra property development like a hole in the head. That explains why the county council's Conservative-controlled environment committee is allowing three major road companies, RMC, Tarmac and the Hanson Trust-owned ARC company, to build 3,000 more homes, a motorway service area, hotel, and a retail-cum-industrial park on Kennet Meadows on the south-west edge of the decrepit London dormitory town, Reading.

By a remarkable coincidence the same three companies donated a useful £170,000 to Tory funds last year. This interesting fact was discovered by Coun Peter Ruhemann, Labour parliamentary candidate for Reading West, who, with magnanimity announced that he was *not* saying that Berkshire Tories were "directly influenced by these contributions to their party's funds".

Ruhemann is concerned over the proposed motorway service areas on a nearby stretch of the notorious M4. Following a directive from the Department of Transport, the scheme was rejected by Newbury district council, resulting in an appeal, brought by landowners ARC and developers Mobil.

The appeal was due to be heard last October until it was mysteriously postponed until June 1992 — ie after the general election. By an amazing coincidence the Tory parliamentary candidate for Newbury, Judith Chaplin, is also head of John Major's policy unit. The fact that ARC gave the Tory party £80,000 last year is completely irrelevant.

WESTMINSTER

THE *EYE'S* mail bag has been overflowing with irate letters from employees of hyper-efficient Westminster city council, one of Britain's richest local authorities.

The letters from part-time tutors with the borough's penny-pinching education department explain succinctly how Westminster has become so rich: it withholds paying staff as and when it feels like it!

At the end of October the council-run Westminster Adult Education Institute sent tutors a terse missive which ran: "You may recall that I wrote to you on the 2nd of September advising you that the method of paying your salary would be amended to provide you with a better service. It is now my unfortunate task to advise you that you will not receive any payment at the end of October as you expected."

According to the institute's chief finance officer, Paul Hodson, "a combination of reasons has led to this position — some human and some emanating from the computer system." To add insult to injury, Hodson then informs the starving lecturers that he is taking the usual "all steps possible" to make "salary 'subs' to allay the problems caused by our failure", before deflating expectations with an admission that Westminster "are themselves [*sic*] undergoing staff resource problems and may not be able to make any salary 'subs' at all."

Perhaps the council should flog off a few more cemeteries to raise a few much-needed pence for the tutors.

HACKNEY

THE ingenuity of those behind the council housing fraud in Hackney knows no bounds: Britain's most impoverished borough is awash with a black market keys-for-sale racket whereby would-be tenants bypass housing waiting lists and pay rent money directly into the pockets of corrupt town hall employees.

At least some residents know how to have a good time — especially those in Lower Clapton's Nightingale Estate which recently hosted an exciting series of decibel-friendly all-night "raves". While clearing up the debris from one all-nighter, neighbours, unimpressed with the revelries of the E-dropping, house-bopping funksters, were surprised to find no signs of a forced entry. They mounted an investigation and discovered that the party people had paid £200 to hire a large, uninhabited section of the estate for the night, set up their sound system in a "communal" area and unlocked a couple of landings' worth of flats *with the appropriate keys*!

Council leaders have so far shown only half-hearted interest in curtailing the keys-for-sale scams, sacking a mere 14 officers. Inspector Knacker recently made his 20th arrest in conjunction with the racket and conservative figures suggest as many as a quarter of Hackney's 42,000 houses could be involved.

BIRMINGHAM

THE absurd antics of senior social workers running the city's appalling children's homes reach ever dizzier heights with the discovery of assistant director Richard Drinkall in a public toilet in unusual circumstances.

His resignation immediately afterwards was followed by the sealing of his office and a ban on him entering any social services building.

Drinkall, 47, ran children's homes and old people's homes throughout south Birmingham — including the notorious St John's — and had been widely tipped as the department's next director. His director, Adrianne Jones, forlornly hoping to avoid more scandal, has ordered a total blackout on the reasons for Drinkall's resignation, citing "personal reasons."

Meanwhile St John's has coincidentally been hit by a series of resignations as staff sicken of their appalling training and management. Two managers of the Pentlands secure unit have quit — one just walking out — and section leaders in the home's other three units have also resigned.

The home is lucky to be standing: two boys recently smashed a pipe and let the building fill with gas and then sat smoking on the roof while masked firemen looked for the leak.

HEALTH NEWS

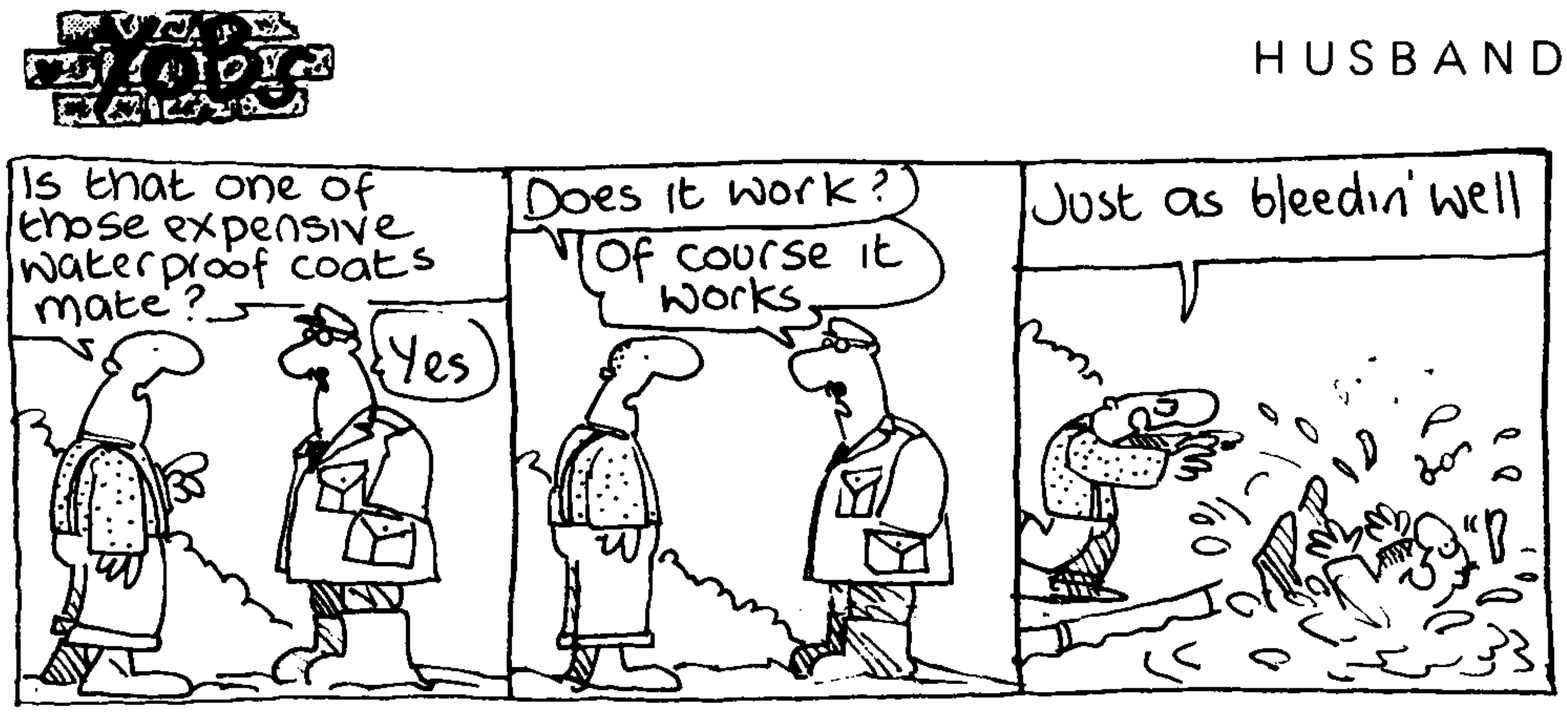
THE NHS under William Waldegrave is not just designed to annoy patients and those who work in it, but it is also able to undermine those visiting the sick (when they are lucky enough to secure an operation) or delivering them to hospital.

Anyone turning up at a hospital in the South East Thames Regional Health Authority area by car must pay parking charges. They must also have the correct change. Without it they face a ticket of up to £60, clamping, or being towed away.

Consultants, meanwhile, are getting over the directive to keep hospital waiting lists down to within two years — *two years!* — by abolishing them. In parts of Kent, East Sussex, Surrey and south-east London, it is consequently impossible to get referred for simple mainstream operations for hip replacement, adenoids and tonsils.

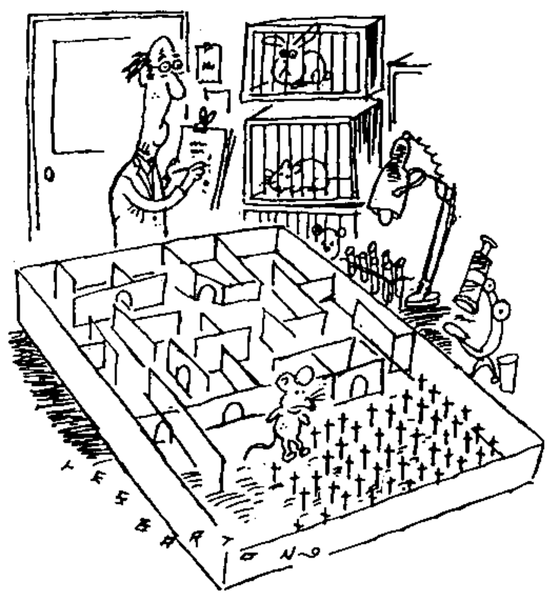
The army of volunteer drivers who bring non-acute patients to hospital, and visitors to see their hospitalised nearest and dearest, are also now to be taxed on their expenses (currently 27p a mile). The Treasury has decided that this is a highly profitable activity and NHS volunteer drivers are to have tax stopped from their expenses payments.

At a stroke this will destroy the volunteer service without which the SE Thames region of the NHS cannot function. There are not enough ambulances, crews, taxis or resources in the area to make up the difference.



DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'



THE DUTCH countryside is so seriously contaminated with a surfeit of manure that the enterprising Dutch have now become world leaders in, er, talking shit.

Indeed, Mijnheer Bummkreef of Boxmeer, something of an expert on manure-related matters, reports significant breakthroughs in The Netherlands' effluent policy and practice.

Among the proposals on offer in his company's new sales effort directed at British farmers are:

- To dry the manure to make it lighter and then transport it to East Germany.
- Not to dry the manure and to ship it to East Anglia instead.
- A big promotion extolling the virtues of Dutch manure, which omits any reference to the fact that the Dutch are swimming in it and *desperate* to get rid of it.
- The application of the new environmental pig house flushing system to the main public sewers, or recycling the manure into valuable protein foodstuffs.

Mr Bummkreef calculates that from 20,000 tonnes of liquid manure 2,000 to 3,000 tonnes of good quality protein can be recovered. He is plainly a man who not only talks shit but would not be averse to eating it, either.

WITH ALL the grand talk of sovereignty and federalism, it is easy to forget that the real drama gripping Brussels is the suppression of the banana.

Because the Germans lost their tropical colonies in 1918, they have never developed protectionist policies towards their suppliers. The country thus has a free market in bananas, and the greedy Germans guzzle cheaper, bigger and better quality fruit than the rest of Europe.

Naturally, the French, Dutch and British delegations believe this is unfair and are insisting the Germans block this unseemly breach in their tariff walls and pay as much as the rest of us do for substandard fruit.

The price of German bananas is almost half the price in Britain. The Germans consume 14kg per person while the British eat only 8kg of smaller fruit. The British grant monopoly rights to importers and wholesalers whose profits far exceed the aid going to the former colonies. The Centre for International Economics calculates this dopey policy costs the British consumer £6 for every £1 of aid given.

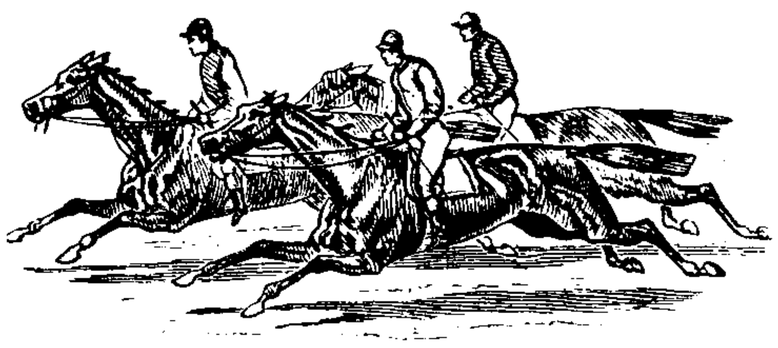
Guus Maussen, president of Chiquita a subversive banana trader that wants to ship cheaper, bigger, better bananas, expresses dismay: "There is no chink of light, no morsel of commonsense, no excuse for the British banana regime."

THE EXCLUSIVE right to define world standards in food is being devised by the United Nation's Food and Agricultural Organisation. The "Codex Alimentarius" will be an inventory of what multinationals will permit and promote during the 21st century. The folly of the project makes Europe's common agricultural policy look like petty theft.

The Royal Society Walker Lecturer recognises the dangers: "This supranational commission consists of bureaucrats, representatives of agrochemical and food industries along with their scientific advisers. It must be remembered they are their own advocates and judges. The Codex Committee is severely biased."

Professor Philip James, director of the Rowatt Research Institute, confirms: "Codex is dominated by the food industry. The Codex Alimentarius suffers from a well-documented disease — agency capture — whereby the regulators are under the influence of the regulated."

Old Muck could not have put it better himself.



Sporting Life

EVER SINCE Arazi's brilliant victory in the Breeders Cup Juvenile in Louisville on 2 November the racing press has been full of how the French champion might run in both the Kentucky and the Epsom Derby in 1992.

While bookmakers' odds on this intriguing possibility have been freely distributed, few journalists on this side of the Atlantic have latched on to the significance of events in the Bluegrass since the race. According to some Kentucky sources, it is by no means 100 percent certain Arazi will ever race again, let alone be able to mount a successful challenge on the American and European classic races.

Arazi's trainer, Francois Boutin, was deeply opposed to the colt running in this year's Breeders Cup. He felt that for a lightly made horse he'd already been over-raced as a two year old in France and that to subject him to another severe test might ruin him for next year. The decision to go to Louisville was taken by Arazi's principal owner, Georgia aerospace tycoon, Allen Paulson.

Paulson, likened to a fat old alligator by New York racing writer Steven Crist, has an ego to match his bulk. His company is the largest manufacturer of executive jets in the world — if you want a plane with gold lamé curtains and bath taps, Paulson's your man. His pride demands that one day he should win the Kentucky Derby. Whatever Boutin or co-owner Sheikh Mohammed may think, he's decided Arazi will fulfil that dream.

But his obsessive ambition may have retarded or even curtailed the horse's career. In the days leading up to the Breeders Cup professional tipster Marten Julian, who was in the US, received information that Arazi might have some kind of a "problem" and that Boutin was particularly concerned about the effect a hard race on the American dirt might have on him. Arazi competed in the Juvenile on the painkilling drug Butazolidin, which is prohibited on racedays in the European racing countries.

After the race it was announced that Arazi would not go straight back to France but would stop off at Brookside Farm, Paulson's Kentucky stud base, for a short holiday. Paulson claimed at first that he "wanted to let the people at the farm see him. There's no point rushing him back after all he did". Boutin implied that more than a vacation was in store when he revealed that Arazi was "to have a complete check-up with Mr Paulson's vet". Two days later came the dramatic announcement that Arazi had undergone surgery for arthritic knees. Small bone chips that had been causing inflammation and pain had been removed from the top joints in both knees.

Paulson's spokesmen insist the operation was a minor one and that the colt will still return to Boutin in approximately 30 days' time. Steve Crist thinks the horse will never race outside America again, as even if it does recover it will always need Bute to give of its best. Leading Kentucky veterinary surgeon Dr Robert Copelan, who treated the precociously gifted Danzig for a similar problem in 1980 (which ended Danzig's racing days on a premature note), reckons Arazi has only a 50-50 chance of returning to the track. Anyone still tempted to take a price about him for Epsom should seek psychiatric attention.

'Major Bonkers'

Letters

Private Eye

Liquid assets

Sir,

Is there some connection between a) the ridiculous PRIVATE EYE *campaign to deter libel suits; the Curse of Gnome, featured in recent issues, and b) the mysterious death at sea of arch-enemy Mr Robert Maxwell?*

Yours faithfully,
JOE SPARTSED,

London N17.

Sir,

Wondering how you would deal with the death of your favourite targets — we thought the response of his family might be of some help to you in setting the tone.

Kevin, asked on BBC NEWS AT ONE *today (7th) "How will your style differ from his?" replied, "Well, I'm thinner than he was."*

Yours faithfully,
R. GODDARD,

Gt Bookham, Surrey.

Sir,

There is a short story by Ian Fleming featuring James Bond titled THE HILDEBRAND VARIETY *in which the millionaire owner of a large yacht disappears at night in mysterious circumstances whilst at sea.*

In view of the recent sad and untimely demise of Cap'n Bob, are the circumstances perchance related? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN L. BISSON,

Birkenhead, Wirral.

Sir,

I'm a bit out of touch here so probably many already have, but has anyone noticed the unfortunate resemblance between the sad and mysterious demise of Cap'n Bob and Alan Coren's comments on THE NEWSQUIZ *broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 6/5/91 when he said "Except the idea of Maxwell floating is enjoyable to many of us. Sinking would be marginally better, but we'll take floating if that's all that's on offer."*

Never mind the rest of us, I think the police should be informed.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD STAKES,

Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Sir,

What an unfortunate time for the 8 Nov issue to be published. (Or not as the case may be.) Will this spell the end for Pergamon Memorandum?

Yours faithfully,
BEN GLAZIER,

Aldgate.

Very fishy

Sir,

Robert Maxwell MC — Deceased

After a lifetime in shipping I find the events surrounding the death of the above named to be rather bizarre.

Except when a ship has been in dire straits, I cannot recall a case where an individual in his death throes has attempted to get over a ship-side rail or wire. Those whose duties require them to board or disembark by rope ladder know the mental concentration and physical effort required in getting over rails and can claim with some confidence that mental and physical inhibitions prevent normal people from breaking the psychological barrier of "going over the wall".

Having participated in numerous official death inquiries in respect of crew members and passengers, I feel that some more clarification is needed as follows:

1. The incident involved the death of a British subject in a UK registered vessel. Are we sure that the owners have complied with all of the Department of Transport's stringent requirements for crew lists, certification, log-books and inquiries?

2. People living in relatively close proximity in ships usually have an actual or sixth sense that something out of the ordinary is going on, especially a 20 stone man lumbering around or the splash when such a body goes overboard.

Good seamanship demands constant vigilance and reporting procedures, so it would be interesting to know what "Night" and "Standing Orders" were promulgated by the Master, also the decision-making process in setting courses around that time.

3. Scotland Yard often go to distant places to investigate mysterious deaths of British subjects in UK ships, so why have they not been alerted by one of the number of parties who must be concerned to quash the rumours which are floating around?

4. The difficulty of getting a 20 stone man overboard could be well demonstrated by getting a similar sized person to act the part after which he should be medically examined, especially after being dropped over a ship-side rail or wire. Also the ship's fittings should be subjected to scientific testing for stressing, etc.

5. The Registrar-General of Shipping & Seamen, Cardiff, keeps records of all deaths at sea and it would be interesting to learn how many deaths similar to Mr Maxwell's have occurred over the course of time: also what are the verdicts after a proper inquiry.

If I can be of any more help, please let me know.

Yours faithfully,
G.C. SHAW, OBE,

Mersea Maritime Bureau, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

Bulk order

Sir,

I know that Robert Maxwell was a "fat bastard", but please don't take his death too lightly. It would be nice to read something good about him. I don't know what though!!

Yours faithfully,
KEITH HUNTER,

Milngavie, Glasgow.

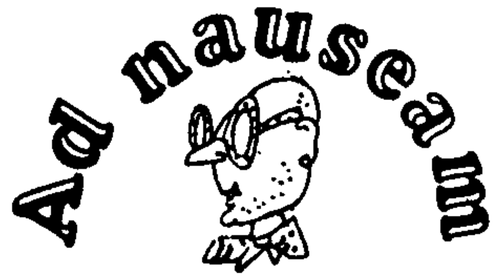
Prophet and loss

Sir,

I wonder if any other readers have noticed the amazing coincidence between the disappearance of your Cap'n Bob cartoon and the article about the huge mass in the sea, and his untimely death today. Do you have amazing powers of prophecy? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON JOBSON,

Corpus Christi, Oxford.



Sir,

I think Michael Palin should be told of the similarity between the butler in the film THE MISSIONARY *and the one in the "Ferrero Rocher" ad. I'm sure his response would be get lost.*

Yours faithfully,
SIMON WALTON,

Gledhow, Leeds.

Fag ashes to ashes

Sir,

The Strange Death of Robert Maxwell

You probably won't know that the Russian KGB in the 1950s developed an assassination weapon ***which induced fake heart attacks.***

The weapon was built into a dummy cigarette packet and had a small gas canister concealed within. The KGB assassin then offered a cigarette to the unsuspecting victim and sprayed a special gas into his face. Rather like a modern CS gas self defence spray. This special gas produced all the symptoms of a massive heart attack and left virtually no trace.

It was actually used during the height of the Cold War in the mid 1950s in West Berlin. A small handful of dissident East European journalists, broadcasters and writers, who had attacked the Soviet Union died of heart attacks, even though they had no history of heart trouble and were all young and healthy. The deaths were treated as suspicious by the West.

This weapon was also probably used in England against the Ukrainian community in Bradford, where two outspoken priests died the same way; but it was never proved.

If the KGB had such a weapon in the 1950s then almost certainly the Western intelligence services such as Mossad and the CIA have similar ones.

Could it be that Robert Maxwell was sprayed with such a gas and then chucked overboard by an agent on his yacht, as he knew too much about arms dealing in the Irangate scandal and a lot more besides? Stranger things have happened.

Yours faithfully,
ROB CALDICOTT,

Manchester.

Lookalike

Peel

Machiavelli

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable similarity between Radio One DJ and Oz obscenity trial witness John Peel and the well-known Florentine diplomat and social scientist Niccolo Machiavelli.

Are they, by any chance, related?

Yours;
D.M. LEE,

Stoke-on-Trent.

Norfolk turkey

Sir,

Can we now look forward to the EYE *returning to satire in place of protracted, hate-filled, personal vendettas? (I refer to one which strangely intensified after the subject took you to court and won.) In this you were ably assisted by an army of sycophantic readers quickly realising that they had only to slag off Robert Maxwell to ensure publication of their wearisome letters.*

How damned clever of him to get the last laugh by dying while the EYE *was at the printer. No wonder you looked so pissed-off on the following* HAVE I GOT NEWS FOR YOU *show, Hislop.*

No sick, yobbish front cover but a genuinely funny one of Bill Roache instead, and poor old Thribb, cruelly robbed...

Yours in anticipation,
FRANK VALENTINE,

Caister-On-Sea, Norfolk.

Muck raking

Sir,

I am becoming increasingly irritated by your "Down On The Farm" column. I would be the last to weep over the demise of the prairie-making, BMW-driving, Yuckie "farmers" of the Tory Home Counties, but you really must cast your eyes North of (and West of) the Garden of England.

Small farms have something worth keeping. For example, they stop this fine island becoming a rather large forest. Another example — the (now re-born) Cornish language died out last among agricultural folk.

Please do not spread us with the yard-brush muck of these soft south-eastern poofs.

Dymuniadau Garau,
HUW L. ROBERTS,

Yr Wyddgrug, Clwyd.

Marje in for error

Sir,

I was very distressed by the erroneous description in a recent HP Sauce column concerning a transaction between my husband and myself and the Institute of Economic Affairs and, since you state "there may be another explanation" to the venality you imply, I hope you will consider that there is justice in my request that you publish the explanation.

In 1975 the institute bought (not "bought") a fifth share in the equity of our house for £11,000 (hardly "the substantial five figure sum" you said!) This was on a valuation by two separate estate agents of the value of the whole property of £55,000). The agreement drawn up by an old-established legal firm, stated that the price for our continuing to inhabit the one fifth of the property would be that the Institute would collect one fifth of the then value of the property from our estate — thus if we were killed in an air crash tomorrow, the IEA would have about £60,000 — we hope to live a little longer and the collection on the IEA's original investment of £11,000 is then likely to be even larger.

The HP Sauce suggestion that we might be "made" to buy the equity back at a market price is singularly inappropriate. Last year we offered to buy it back on a chartered surveyor's valuation and were very disappointed that the IEA refused. It is too good an investment.

I do hope that you will publish this "other explanation" in a straightforward way. I believe any journalist of integrity would think it shabby if you do not.

Yours faithfully,
MARJORIE SELDON,

Sevenoaks, Kent.

I-SPY *Newspaper Focus 5.5.91*

NEWSPAPER

MAXWELL FLOATS

But how long can they keep it suspended above AIDS?

Submitted by Sean Keeley. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Sour note

Sir,

Thank goodness no one who matters now buys PRIVATE EYE *which has long since given up its aim to amuse with black comedy and satire for its present mindless and destructive invective. Its aim to put sick people in needless trouble and to destroy charities is less than worthless.*

My attention has been drawn to the column by "Lunchtime O'Boulez". Brendan O'Brian, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's leader, has had to miss concerts because of severe back trouble and for no other cause. In these days when reasons are constantly sought to cut back on subsidies to mainstream work it ill behoves PRIVATE EYE *to be destructive of a group of people gallantly attempting to help improve life rather than make vast fortunes.*

Yours faithfully,
PROF. ANTHONY FIELD, CBE DLitt FCA

London EC2.

Auto destruct

Sir,

However little moral subtlety Heathcote Williams may have, it is clearly too much for Square Eyes. The whole point of comparing (not equating) the massacre on the rodds with the Holocaust is that the Holocaust was not the work of one man; it was a people's acceptance (even encouragement) over a certain period of an attitude towards the Jews that at other times, in other places, would be unthinkable. It so happened that in 1930s Germany it was convenient to accept it and good for one's career to encourage it.

Our attitude now towards the victims of the motor car is comparable. The car is convenient, so we accept (try to ignore) its nasty side.

Your article only demonstrates the pathological need most people have to protect themselves from full awareness of the consequences of our reliance on the car. In Square Eyes' case, this means a lot of cheap asides about inconsistencies in practice that are bound to arise in a society that is so deeply dependent upon the motor car. Easily said, but they don't stop the deaths or the pollution. They only make us forget them (is that the intention?)

Wake up, Square Eyes! The time to start burying the car is now!

Yours faithfully,
PAUL BUTLER,

London N8.

Orff road vehicle

Sir,

I saw the programme AUTOGEDDON *as reviewed by your correspondent "Square Eyes" and found few points of disagreement with him. However, I do feel that he should learn to tell his Orff from his Verdi.*

I did not detect a single note of the former's "Carmina Burana" in the whole tedious programme. There were rather a lot of "bleeding chunks" of the latter's "Requiem" inappropriately interspersed among the carnage. Perhaps they were included because of their "green" associations.

It is a pity that your reviewer's ignorance spoilt his attempt at a pun.

Yours faithfully,
A.J. ROBINSON,

London E17.

Two lane black spot

Sir,

Regarding Trafalgar House's contract to erect the Dartford Bridge without adequate wind protection (EYES PASSIM). *Two days after its opening by Brenda, the bridge was down to two lanes due to high winds. Is there any connection? We thought you should be told.*

Yours faithfully,
R & B MAYNARD,

Upminster, Essex.

PS: Any chance of bigger print in the magazine to help your faithful but ageing original readers?

Maxwellballs

£10 paid for contributions

TREVOR MACDONALD: *How was Mr Maxwell feeling in the last few days?*

RICHARD STOTT (*Mirror editor*): *He was in a very buoyant mood.*
ITN
(D. Maclean)

"Mr Maxwell was last seen walking alive on deck at 4.45 this morning."
TREVOR MACDONALD, ITN
(Tony McIlwrath)

"Robert Maxwell was discovered missing..."
PETER SNOW, Channel 4 News
(K. Rhys Jones)

"It will take a long time for the waters to clear..."
MICHAEL PARKINSON, London Talkback Radio
(C. Lynch)

Letter From **The UN**

from Our Own Correspondent

THE WEST'S favourite candidate for secretary-general of the United Nations is Boutros Ghali, official age: 68. Most Egyptians, however, assume he is 73, two years older than Javier Perez de Cuellar, whom he is supposed to replace.

Since a check-up with George Bush's doctor, Ghali keeps telling diplomats how healthy he feels and seems to be trying to convince people he has the secret of eternal life. His big advantage over Tutankhamen's mummy is that he'll do exactly what the White House tells him.

He will also be able to solve Egypt's economic problems at a stroke: with the national talent for nepotism, it is expected that 80 percent of UN staff would be Egyptian within five years of his taking office.

This threat has almost certainly galvanised the candidacy of Philippine foreign minister Raul Manglapus, despite his 73 years. His nationals have a near-stranglehold on clerical and manual grades at the UN. Unperturbed though he is by tapes of him putting a contract out on rivals, he is unlikely to make the grade.

Former favourite Sadruddin Ali Khan is under a cloud. Not only has he argued against sanctions on Iraq, but there is a damning audit report being sat on in the UN. While in charge of the Afghan relief operation, not only did his office run up a £16.5 million phone bill, but other sums were unaccounted for. No one suspects foul play — but the UN has enough in-house spendthrifts without hiring an outsider.

Many other candidates are politicians about to be given the bum's rush by their own electorates. An outstanding example is Canada's Brian Mulroney, whose disastrous poll rating at home went up when news of his candidacy broke out. Nothing made him so popular as the chance of his going!

But the security council is missing the obvious choice for secretary-general: Samir Shihabi, the justifiably modest Saudi president of the general assembly. The chequebook's choice for the job is already showing clear signs of megalomania. Since taking office he has demanded a larger office than his 45 predecessors in the ceremonial post and has displaced two under secretary-generals to make room.

He decided the guided tours of the UN detracted from his dignity when they came into the general assembly and ordered them stopped — until he was asked if Saudi Arabia would pay the lost tour revenue. Needless to say, the Israelis complained about his being diplomatically absent when foreign minister Levy took the podium — but then the Israelis were absent when Bush spoke. They were suffering from a little known diplomatic ailment for which the only known cure is a ten billion dollar loan guarantee.

As a memory of times past, an American delegate has asked the UN finance committee to make it plain that furnishings in the secretary-general's residence are the property of the UN. This was no reflection on Perez De Cuellar — but on Kurt Waldheim, whose departure was marked by some confusion over personal and international property.

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

TRUE STORIES

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

DURING his interview, Mr John Osselton said: "Last week my aunt, Dr Nora Saunders, a retired eye-specialist, received a letter from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital saying they were now ready to perform her cataract operation. Unfortunately — or fortunately, if you are on their waiting list — she died, aged 80, ten years ago."

MR Jody Corcoran, a spokesman for Monsignor Donnolly of St Peter's, Drogheda, said: "The head of St Oliver Plunkett, who was beheaded in London 320 years ago, has been kept by St Peter's in an unlit, glass-fronted case, but — to the amazement of the world's leading scientists — is in a state of almost complete preservation.

"Yesterday, when it was announced that the head was to be transferred to a new container made of cobalt-treated stone, with controlled light and humidity, Monsignor Donnolly noted that it had produced a fine growth of designer stubble, grey, indeed, but at least two millimetres long, and all over its cheeks and chin."

MR George Nobottle, a student at the Winshaw School of Drama, has been cast as a mouse to promote Scottish Goat Cheese.

Speaking outside his mother's house in Newark, he said: "I am only getting £4.50 an hour, but as it was my first offer I thought I should snap it up."

ALDERMAN Larry Hand of Leichhardt Council has issued a statement through the Mayoral Press Office, saying: "At last week's council meeting I told Alderman Doug Spedding to 'take your Nazi jackboots off and shove them down your throat' and not to 'stick them up your arse', as reported in the minutes."

ORDERING his court to be completely silent, Judge Charles Rinjeu, senior magistrate for Nakuru Province, Zimbabwe, sentenced Mr John Kamau to hang "together with the three members of your robber band, whenever they are caught".

"However," the judge continued, "as Mr Kamau died in police custody before he could be brought to trial, and because his death certificate is missing from his envelope, I commute his sentence to 60 years of hard labour, and may he serve it wherever he is."

ARRESTED soon after the demonstration, Mr Rangsit Yanothai, a Bangkok brothel-keeper, said: "All told, there were about 400 brothel-keepers and their assistants on the march against excessive police demands. This is the result of misreporting in the media. We are not the sex capital of the world. That is Rangoon. Some of us are having difficulty in making ends meet, and hill farmers are charging more and more for their daughters."

"What Mr Yanothai says is all lies," said Bangkok's Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Viroj Prao-in. "There can be no overcharging of brothel-keepers by my men for the simple reason that there are no brothels in the city. The video that showed 20 naked men running away from my officers was taken outside a bath-house that they were closing by order of the Minister of Public Health, Major-General Banhi Ta Ruang."

"I HAVE been training myself to write the letters of the alphabet on a grain of rice for several years," said Mr Harbans Plahe, of Bedfont, Middlesex. "I read about an Indian who could do it and I was inspired. It takes hours and hours and is a strain on the eyes. But it is an achievement. My aim is to draw a rhinoceros on one."

INFORMATION: Shropshire Star 28.8.91; Dublin Sunday World 15.9.91; Nottingham Gazette 24.4.91; Eastern Sydney Herald 12.9.91; Harare Sunday Mail 1.9.91; South China Morning Post 19.9.91; The Hounslow Informer 20.9.91.

MONITORS: Caroline Wright, Barry White, Gregory Tesser, Anon, Miles Macnair, C.R. Kendall, Pearl Pelfrey.

CRITICS' CHOICE

TV

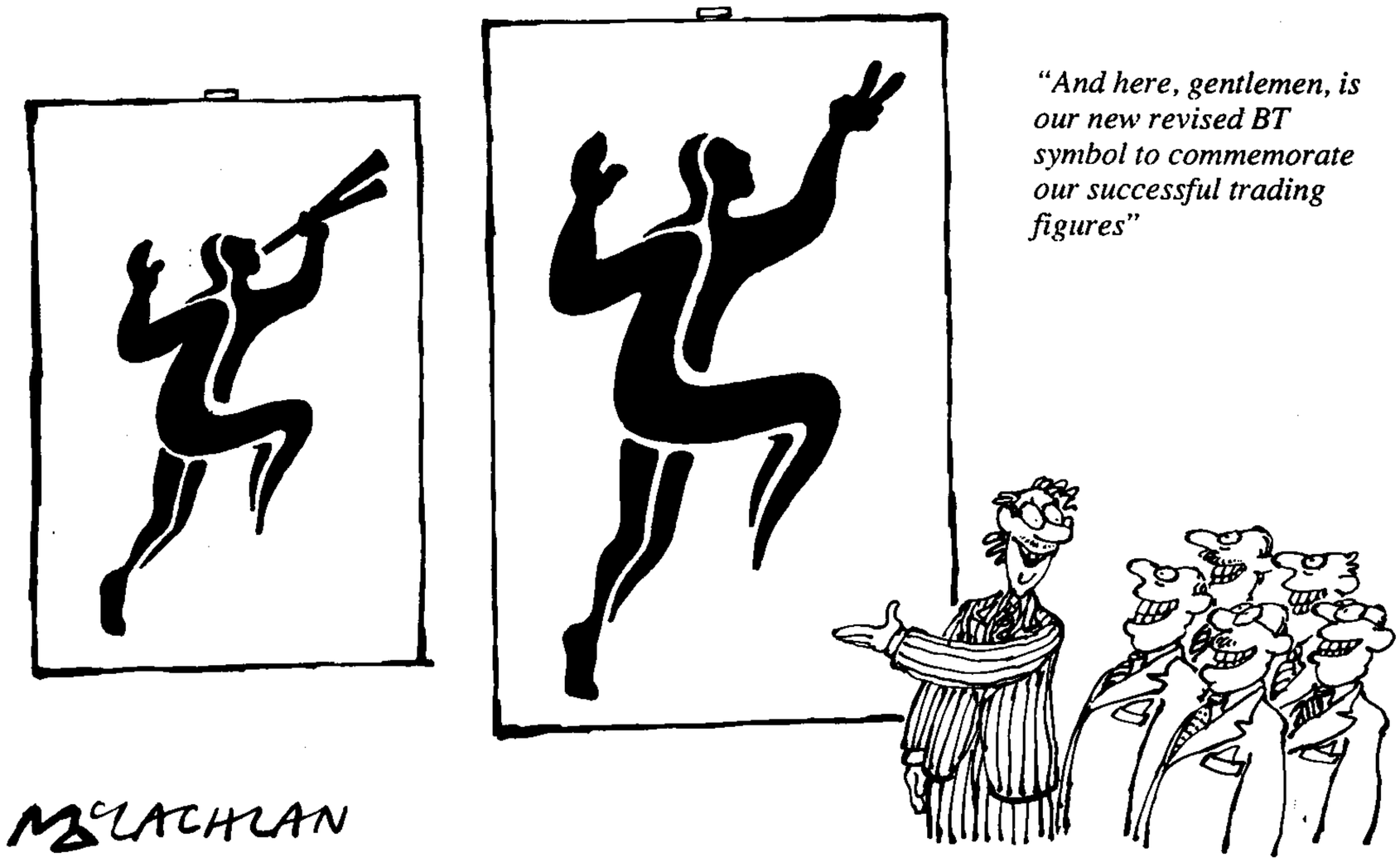
Ashendown — Somerset Maugham's classic story about a special boat service officer who finds himself at a loose end after the war. He seeks adventure by becoming the leader of the Liberal Democrats and appearing on TV every night. Wonderful costumes (suit, tie) and sumptuous locations (*Newsnight* studio) create a spell-bindingly dull effect.

Theatre

Fiddler in the Ground — Revival of bad-taste Jewish spectacular, including hit song *I Used To Be A Rich Man*, starring Intertopol. (A Stoll Mossad Production.)

Films

What About Bob? Even worse taste comedy with *(That's enough choice, Ed).*

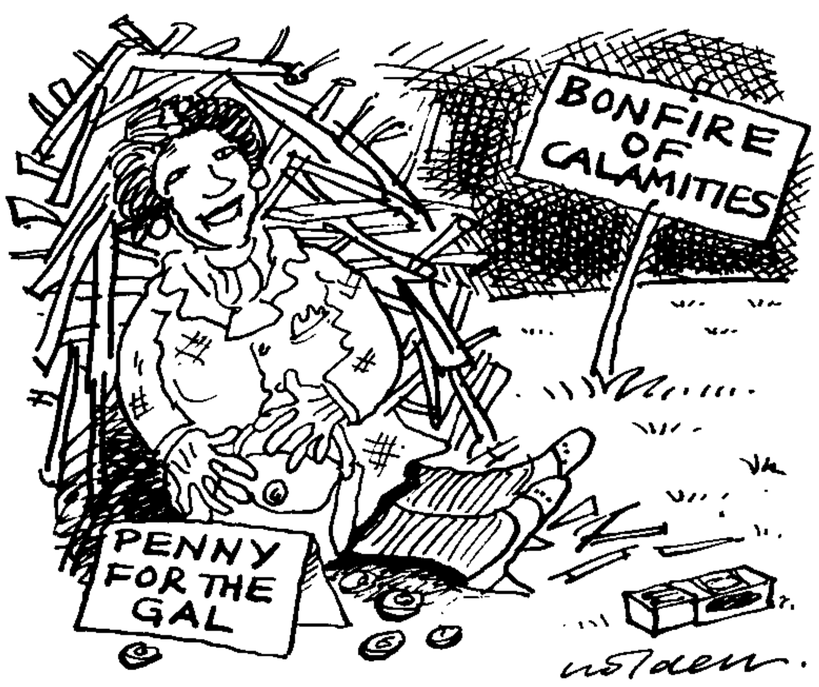


"And here, gentlemen, is our new revised BT symbol to commemorate our successful trading figures"

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47 3/4

Tuesday

Today is Guy Fawkes Night and Mr Lamont invited us all to the next door garden for a bonfire party and what he calls "A Big Bang". As we gathered round the fire to see the guy being burned, my friend Chris said that it was very unfair on Guy Fawkes, who had been quite a decent chap. Wasn't it time, he suggested that



we had someone else to burn every year? I agreed and said that, in this age of Equal Opportunities, it should be a woman. Furthermore, I could think of a very suitable candidate, oh yes!

Thursday

No one takes any serious notice of poor Mr Tebbit any more. He cuts a sad figure appearing on the television every night telling me not to go into Europe. No one listens to him and everyone knows that he is just a mouthpiece for Mrs Thatcher, who is afraid to speak out on her own.

This was quite obvious when she made a speech in America saying that I should not accept the F-word in Europe.

Norma Lamont in our Cabinet meeting today disagreed. He said that it was high time that we told Mrs Thatcher to F-off. They all laughed, but I could not see myself how anyone could Federal off. It is entirely ungrammatical and just shows how overrated all this university education really is.

Friday

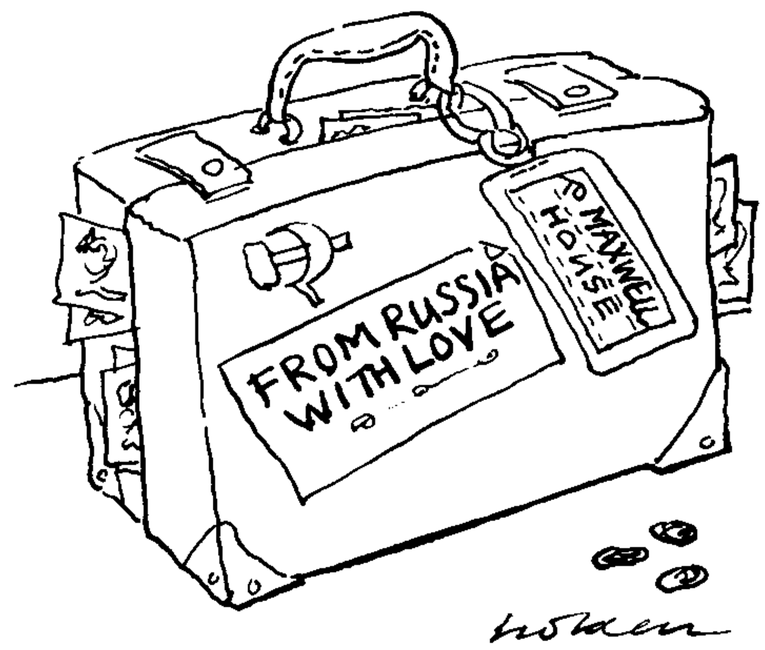
Chris woke me up this morning to say that he had great news about the by-elections. Apparently we lost all three, but not by nearly as much as we could have done. "In many ways," he said, "it was a victory" — which, coincidentally, was a view shared by all the newspapers. Mr Kinnock was clearly rattled by these results and I later saw him on the television drinking champagne and dancing around saying "No. 10, here we go" in an attempt to put a brave face on his defeat. I was particularly interested to see that the Labour Party failed to win in Kincardineshire. I looked this place up on my Daily Telegraph wall map and after a very considerable period of time I discovered it was in a place called Scotland. I decided to call in the Secretary of State for Scotland for a full explanation, but then I realised that I could not remember his name.

Sunday

Today I knew there was something very important I had to remember, but I forgot what it was. Then my wife reminded me by saying: "It's Remembrance Sunday, John. I've laid out your grey poppy to go with your suit." I have always enjoyed watching this very special ceremony on television, and particularly the moment when Mrs Thatcher steps up to place her wreath on the war memorial. But this year it will be me! Mrs Thatcher will have to stand in the background and remain completely silent for two minutes. It will be quite a strain for her, I imagine! She always used to say that Remembrance Sunday was particularly important for her, as she was the only prime minister who had led the country to victory in war. But now it is no longer true. Oh no! I refer of course to my defeat of Saddam Hussein. The thought of this should certainly make her very cross!

Monday

This morning in the Cabinet Mr Mellor said: "Well, Prime Minister, today is a very special day when we remember the fallen." "Don't be silly," I told him. "That was yesterday." "No," he said. "It is exactly a year since we got rid of Mrs Thatcher." Everyone laughed,



except Mr Heseltine who for some reason looked rather glum. Undoubtedly David is a funny man and I am proud to have him in my team. He is just the sort of man we could do with to present our case on the Health Service, since everyone is saying it is a joke.

Tuesday

Mr O'Donnell came in this afternoon to say that a very important newspaper proprietor called Robert Maxwell had died, and that it would be a good idea if I paid a tribute to him to get on The World At One.

Oh yes, I said, I remember him well. He was very helpful to me when I went to Russia. He gave me the name of a key contact of his who I should be sure to look up when I got to Moscow. It turned out to be Mr Gorbachev. When I told Mr Gorbachev that I knew Mr Maxwell, he gave me a large suitcase full of money and asked me to take it to him. I was happy to oblige. Mr O'Donnell said he liked the Gorbachev angle, but said that perhaps I should not go into too much detail as it would make the tribute too long.

Wednesday

Britain has always been a proud and independent nation. We will not be told what to do by any foreign power whomsoever, like the Germans. In my judgement, we must make our own decisions. I said this to Mr Bush when he rang me this morning to tell me that the Libyans were guilty over this plane crash and we were going to introduce sanctions at once. Would I implement the necessary procedures forthwith, or, as he put it in his colourful language, "Shift butt, John, and pronto". I immediately decided, with *no* consultation of my European partners *note*, that sanctions should be applied on Libya at once.

COMING SOON

BBC IN NEED

Yet again, we are calling on your support to help the BBC survive another year. We desperately need everyone in the whole country to contribute £77 to keep the BBC from going under.

Take the case of Terry Wogan, a simple Irish lad reduced to a state of imbecility as a result of 20 years locked in a studio talking to himself. He desperately needs £350,000 this week.

Then there's Alan Yentob. He has a pathological desire to shock people, resulting in his latest outburst, a four-hour extravaganza shouting about homosexuals and lesbians.

Or little blonde Anneka. Reduced to running around the country begging for money. What on earth would *she* do without the support of the BBC?

And then, last and least, Johnny Birt. Born in Liverpool in 1944, he craves love and affection from the Government. It is said that he no longer has a mind of his own.

Next Wednesday is designated

'BBC IN NEED NIGHT' when we will present a star-studded line up. There will be the cast of *Neighbours* in the latest episode of *Neighbours* followed by *News at Six* with Anna Ford then the cast of *EastEnders* in a repeat of the latest episode of *EastEnders*, plus Selina Scott on *Wogan*, and hundreds of others, including Cagney and Lacey, Bruce Forsyth and Jonathan Miller (repeated Thursday, Friday and Monday).

The BBC In Need

— we need help

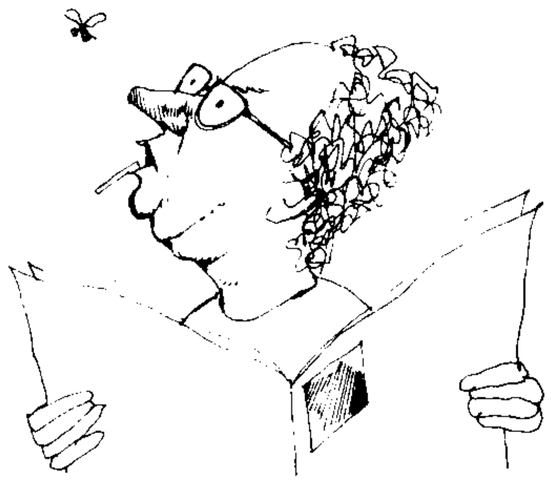
John Cole writes

Hondootedly Maastricht bostik patsykensit Mossus Thotcher Cut Among the Pugeons multo cantabile ma no tropo kreisleriana Two Truck Europe. Tory Buck-bunchers blues brothers arnold schwarzenegger evander holly-fielder hanting of the snark kenny everett ben Okri Seething With Onger. Moster Norman Fowler chipperfield circus dancing at Lughnasa best play award ned sherrin milton schulman I can't believe it's not butter. Moster Norman Tebbit Opsetting Applecart fiveguysnamedmo Single European Corrency timesarrow fantasiestuckë davidsbundlertanze Parliamentary Sovereignty. Fuderalist Stombling Block On Path To Unity pollyfiller pollytoynbee pollyputthekettleon Jacques Delors Moster Ruud Lubbers motherkelly's doorstep mulligatawny ovenready chips *(continued page 94)*

It's all very well these Serbs and Croats killing each other...

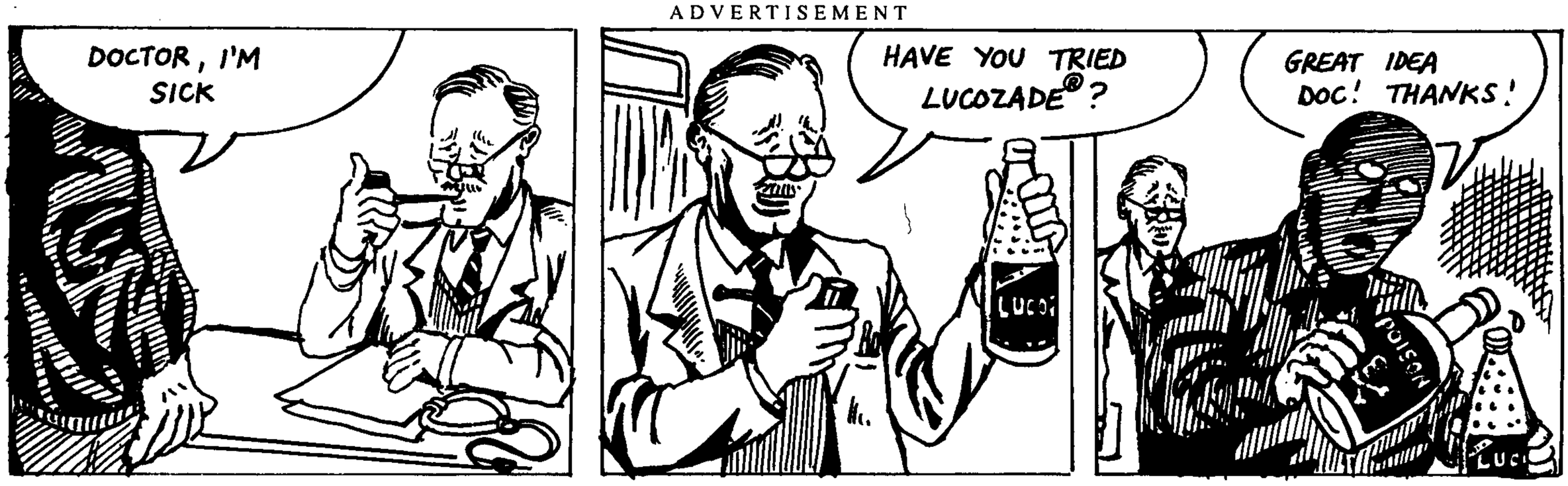
...they've been doing it for hundreds of years, after all...

...but there does come a point when the rest of us Europeans have to take a stand...



...when they start knocking down agreeable old buildings in Dubrovnik, where we always go for our holidays.

ADVERTISEMENT



ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE ANIMAL LIBERATION FRONT

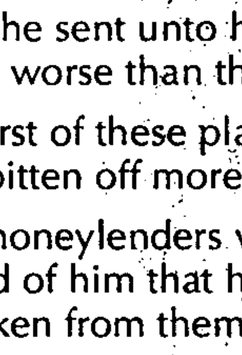
MAXWELL RIDDLE SOLVED — BIBLE OFFERS EXPLANATION

THE BOOK OF ~~JOB~~ BOB

Chapter One

1. And, lo, there dwelt in the land of Pergam-on a man, mighty in girth, whose name was Bob. And the Lord blest Bob, and showered him with earthly blessings.
2. For he gaveth unto his servant Bob many sons and daughters and riches greater than any man could reckon.
3. And Bob praised the Lord mightily, for he said: "Surely I am the most fortunate of men. For do I not have many mansions, a yacht forty cubits long and many servants?
4. "And am I not known unto all the mighty ones of the world, a friend to princes and potentates, yea even unto Cea-ces-cu?
5. But the Lord looketh upon his servant Bob and saith unto himself: "Here is a man who hath become puffed up like unto the bull-frog that sitteth upon the lily-pad that is in the pools of Sha-ron and Tra-cey."
6. And, from that time, the Lord turneth away his face from Bob. And he sent unto him a succession of plagues to try him, each worse than the one which went before.
7. And the first of these plagues was the plague of debts. For Bob had bitten off more than he could cheweth.
8. And the moneylenders waxed wroth with Bob, and demanded of him that he should return unto them all that he had taken from them on usury, even an billion-fold or twain.
9. And this putteth the wind up Bob, even as the wind that bloweth the tear gas across the lands of Gaza. For Bob looketh into his treasury and findeth it empty.
10. Then came a second plague, even more terrible than the first. For this was the plague of hacks, who rose up against him, crying mightily, saying: "Bob, thou has been thoroughly investigated and we can exclusively reveal that thou art not only bankrupt and an frightful crook, but that thou hast also for many years been privily an agent of the following organisations — viz. Mossad, the KGB, the Securitate, you name it, thou hast been in it up to thy neck."
11. And, lo, there was among the hacks a man called Hersh, who said unto Bob: "I charge thee that it was thou who betrayed Van-u-nu into the hands of Shamir, that he might be cast even into the deepest dungeon that is in the land of Is-rael."
12. Then Bob was sore cast down. For he kneweth that his number was up.
13. And he saw coming over the horizon a cloud of troubles that would engulf him, even as the world was engulfed by the Great Flood in the time of Noah.
14. And so Bob called unto him his captains and his servants and he saith: "Make ready my ship, that is forty cubits long and twenty cubits high. For I will go forth upon the waters of the deep and speak to the Lord about all these troubles which have come upon my head."
15. And it was about the fifth hour of the day, when the earth was still in darkness, that they came unto the land of Can-ary.
16. And whilst the servants of Bob were asleep, Bob casteth off his raiment, strode upon the deck, and crieth out with an loud voice: "Lord, Lord, deliver me from mine troubles."
17. Then the Lord sent a great fish, which is called Leviathan. And the fish swimmeth through the waters and swalloweth up Bob with an mighty gulp.
18. And after three days the fish vomiteth forth Bob, even upon the Mount of Olives.
19. And all the sons of Israel gathered in that place to see this wondrous thing that had come to pass.
20. And they said one unto the other: "All praise to the servant of the Lord, Bob, who was surely the greatest man that ever walked upon the earth."

Here endeth the Book of Bob.



Service for Channel 4 viewers

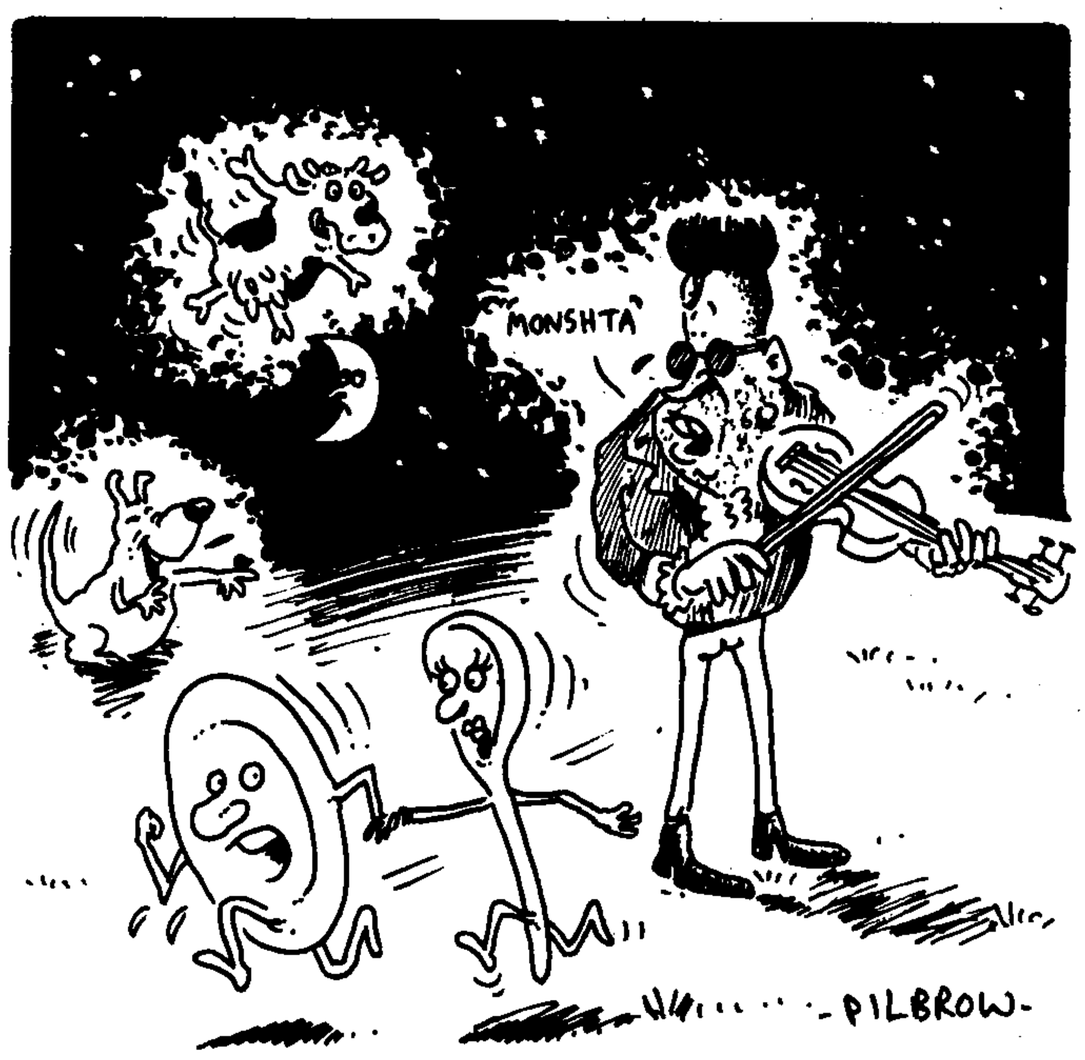
Your Basketball queries explained

with Ol' Globetrotter

Q: Can you settle a long-running dispute between my brother Wayne and myself (Dwayne)? He reckons that "Magic" Johnson became HIV Positive through conventional heterosexual intercourse. I am not convinced. What is your opinion?

Dwayne and Wayne Payne
717 Tailback Road
Crawley

A: It is customary during the fourteen-minute time-outs for numbers eight and eleven on both sides to countermark the ring play. This they can do by either utilising the left-handed double-pass manoeuvre or alternatively attempting a flipside drop throw. You may well remember the famous occasion during the 1973 Eastern League semi-finals when the Quakers met the Jets and *(That's enough. Ed.)*



"Run for it — it's the pratt and the fiddle"

Lines Written On The Funeral Of The Late Captain Robert Maxwell MC

'Twas in the year nineteen-hundred-and-
ninety-one
That occurred the tragic death of Israel's greatest
son.

Known to all the world as Robert Maxwell,
The mysterious circumstances of his end served
all the hacks well.

But however amazing was the way he drowned,
It was as nothing compared with the ceremony
when he was put in the ground.
A State Funeral, no less, was decreed by Prime
Minister Shamir
And great leaders came from both far and from
near.

And so outside the walls of the Holy City
The great crowd gathered, weeping with pity.
There were dignitaries too many to count,
All solemnly assembled on the Olive Mount.
Shamir and Sharon and Gerald Kaufmann too,
Even Archbishop Coggan joined that motley crew,
Which was led to the graveside by President
Herzog.
(The only person missing was William Rees-Mogg.)

Before the corpse into the ground was laid
Many a tribute to the deceased was paid.
(Unlike the bills he had left behind.
A vast sum indeed for his poor sons to find!)

They spoke of him as a hero and a saint,
Which to some observers he certainly ain't
(shurely 'wasn't'? Ed.)
As a mixture of Churchill and Moses, they
described this tycoon,
With no one saying that he was a bullying
buffoon.

And so fittingly he returned to his native land.
(Where he had never actually lived, on the other
hand.)
But it was appropriate he should rest at last in
the land of milk and honey,
For, after all, he had given them an awful lot of
money.

© William Rees-McGonagall, 1991.

AUTUMN BOOKS

Great Royal Courtiers Through The Ages by HRH The Princess Michael of Plagaria (formerly Marie-Clare Von Ripoff)

(Snipcock & Tweed, £25.99)

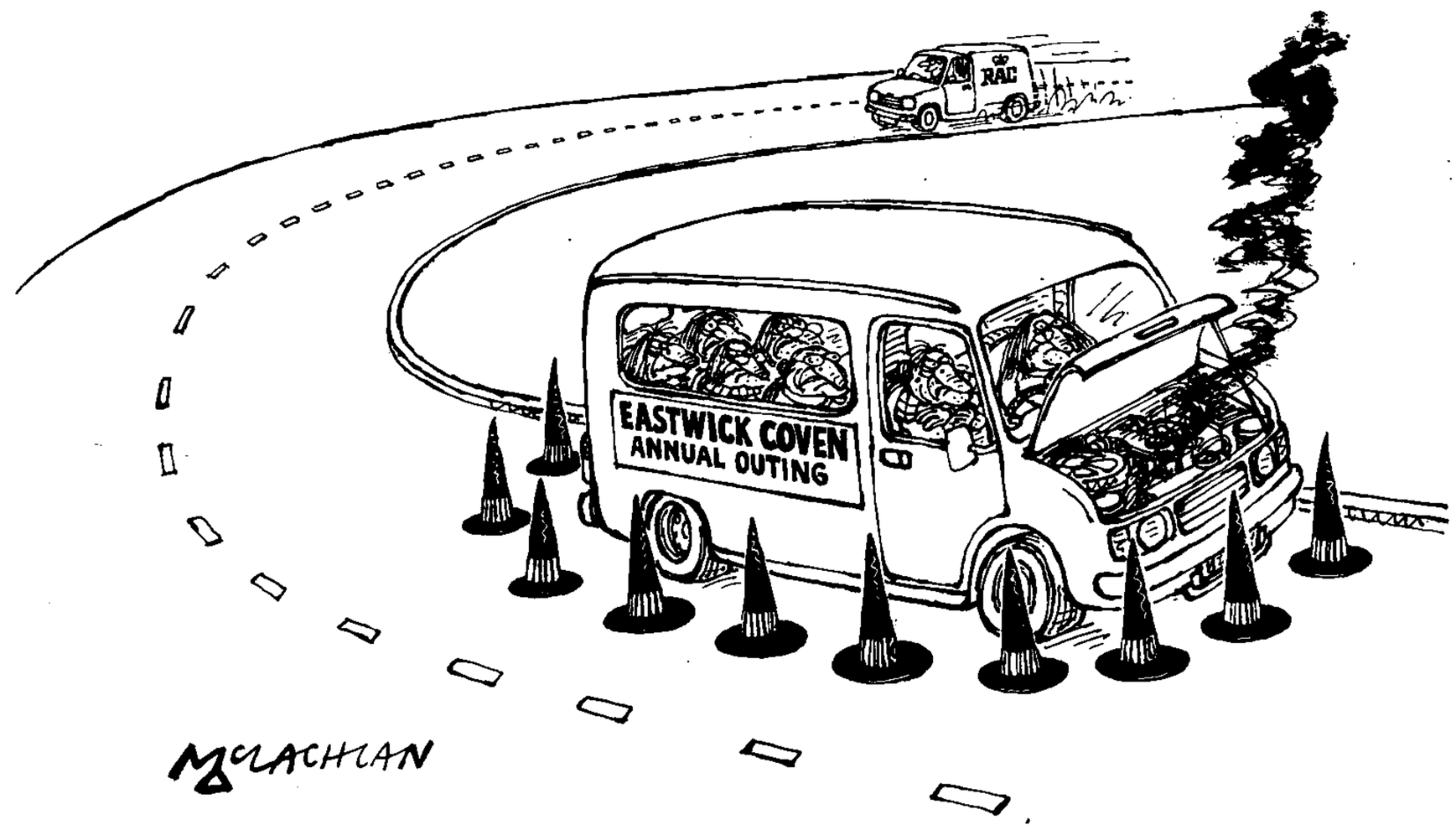
PERHAPS the most celebrated of all royal courtiers in the closing decades of the twentieth century was the great diarist and gossip Sir Nigel de Browntongue Pratt-D'Umpster.

Born in 1953 as plain Bruce Pratt, D'Umpster was the 12th child of an indigent washerwoman in the small up-country town of New Festerville, Queensland. Despite receiving no schooling (Sherborne), the young Pratt emigrated to London, where he soon fell in with the loose-living fast set in the Earls Court Road quartier. Among those who befriended him at this crucial phase of the young toady's career were Bruce Billabong, Ozzie Castlemaine and Barry Boomerang. Pratt soon realised, however, that his social horizons lay on an altogether wider stage. A chance meeting with the beautiful and gracious Princess Margaret quickly established him as the leading sycophant of his day. It was at this point, when he volunteered to write the life story of the radiant and ever-youthful princess, under the inimitable title *God Bless You Ma'am, The World's Most Wonderful Woman*, that he decided to change his name to Nigel D'Arslikhan Twytte-D'Umpster, a cognomen more in keeping with his newfound station in life.

But now even greater glory beckoned (© Lady Magnesia Freelove). On a never-to-be-forgotten evening in 1987, D'Umpster saw across a fashionably crowded room the tall, willowy, elegant, distinguished, Aryan beauty Her Royal Highness The Princess Michael of Ribbentrop. The Princess singled him out at once from the crowd with the immortal words: "Jeez, Prattie, I ain't seen you since we whanged our dongers in the kedgeree with little Clivey, down by Abo's Creek." From that day on, D'Umpster never left her backside, and was ever attentive to her every desire to be mentioned favourably in his ridiculous column.

But such a dizzying career of fame and fortune was not to last. Eventually he appeared on television, where his oleaginous flattery of the Princess so sickened all three viewers (Sir David and Lady Fester and myself) that D'Umpster fell from grace and was forced to eke out his remaining days as a humble disc jockey, "deputising" for the great Sir Sidney Yobbo on the Radio 2 programme *Wake Up Sid, You're On Air.*

I would like to thank the following for allowing me to quote extensively from their works: Lady Elizabeth Longford, Lord John Julius Norwich, Sir Edward Twinky, The Count Tolstoy, Sir Alistair Brunette, Sir Arthur Bryant, and various other authors without titles, which is why I haven't mentioned them.



HOME OFFICE BANS DEMO

by Our Legal Staff
Roger Law and Peter Carter-Fluck

THOUSANDS of lawyers were yesterday prevented from staging a mass protest at the death of Mr Robert Maxwell.

The lawyers, who had been planning to march down the Strand to hold a candlelit vigil outside the Law Courts, agreed to call off their demonstration at the request of the Attorney-General, Sir Patrick Mayhew.

A spokesman for the lawyers, Mr Oscar Self-Abeuselinck, explained that the untimely death of Mr Maxwell threatened the legal profession with the gravest disaster it had ever known.

"For years," he said, "London's top lawyers have depended on Mr Maxwell for their livelihoods. All we wanted to do was to draw the attention of the public to our tragic plight now that he is gone."

Fatwa Man

"We calculate that already 1,000 writs have been lost in the week since the sad passing of the greatest philanthropist the legal profession has known since the late Sir Jams Fishpaste."

But a Home Office spokesman said: "It is totally unacceptable that the lawyers should stage such a demonstration at a time when delicate negotiations are still taking place over the release of £20 millions of insurance money."

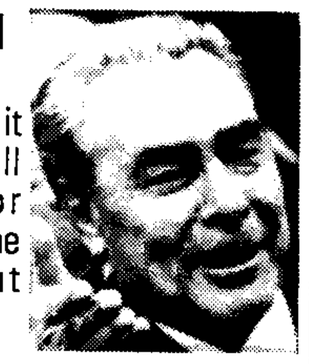
Mr Salman Rushdie is 47.

MAXWELL

Tributes pour in as world mourns

President Nicolae Ceausescu
"He was a true friend of mankind, a great leader and a world statesman."

President Leonid Brezhnev
"Hullo Bob, or is it dosvidenyah! All we worked for together has come to nothing. But that's life!"

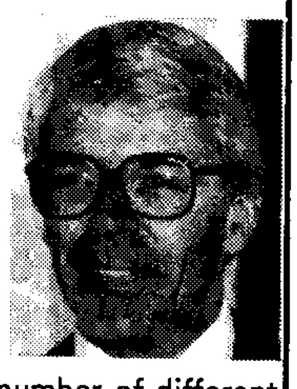


President Todor Zhivkov
"The world today seems a much smaller place without Comrade Bob, the bravest, most loyal friend the Bulgarian people ever had."

Marshal Josef Stalin
"I salute the memory of Comrade Maxwell, the most gallant soldier of World War Two. I look forward to welcoming him down here for many millions of hours of happy talk about the old days."

President Ernst Honecker
"As we say in my country: Sieg Heil, Bob. Du bist ein gute freund von der Deutsche Demokratische Republik. Sorry about the 10 million marks I owe you, but now the Czech is in the past. Geddit? Ha ha ha!"

Prime Minister John Major
"In my judgement Robert Maxwell was a larger-than-life character who made a very considerable contribution to this country's life in a number of different ways. Oh yes."



(That's enough tributes to Maxwell. Ed.)

A Spanish Doctor writes

As a doctor, I am often asked: "What are the symptoms of a heart attack?"

The answer is very simple. The patient usually wakes up in the early morning feeling hot and asks for the air-conditioning to be adjusted. After a short period he takes off all his clothes, opens the cabin door, and goes to the only section of the boat without a proper rail. He then propels himself at the moment of death straight into the water, without hitting the side of the vessel. Seven hours later, he is discovered.

This is perfectly normal and should give no cause for concern. Heart attack, or *Maxwellus dubius circumstansis mortalis mortalis*, as we Spanish doctors call it, is a common medical description of something a bit fishy.

If you are worried about your life insurance policy you should consult professional private detectives at once.

© A Spanish Doctor

REPRINTED FROM THE DAILY TELEGRAPH OBITUARY COLUMN

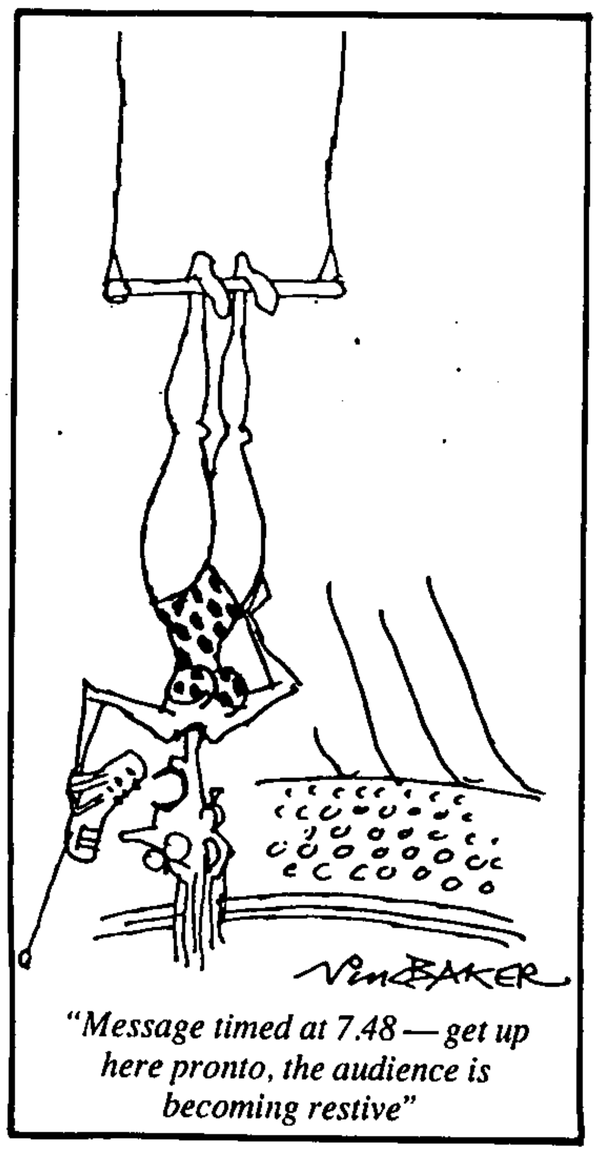
Captain Robert "Bob" Maxwell MC

CAPTAIN ROBERT MAXWELL, who died abroad on 9 November, was the last surviving member of the celebrated "Y Company" of the 21st/43rd Parachute Regiment, which played such a crucial part in the raid on Bruges in 1944 (later the subject of the epic film *They Flew To Bruges*, in which the part of Captain Maxwell was played by Anthony Quinn).

On the morning of 19 June, Maxwell led his men in a daring "drop" over the infamous Bruges salient, which was heavily defended by General Wolfgang Vogler's 78 Panzer Division, known as "Der Donnerblitzers". *(This is terrific stuff. I really am enjoying this. Lots more copy please! M. Hastings, Ed.)* As dawn broke, "Bob", as we was affectionately known to his men, led an assault on 27 Tiger V tanks, as he was often to describe later, destroying them all single-handed, armed only with a Swiss Army knife. His commanding officer, Lt. Col. "Biffo" Prattwinkle (whose obituary was printed in these columns last week) immediately recommended him for a medal to his Corps commander, Lt. Gen. "Jumbo" Massingberd (whose obituary we published last month and who incidentally was my great-grandfather), as a result of which he was decorated in the field with the MC by Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery of Massingberd (whose obituary we printed in 1963).

When he left the army, Captain Maxwell pursued a career in publishing.

(Will this do? H.M-M.)



"Message timed at 7.48 — get up here pronto, the audience is becoming restive"

Agatha Christie's

MURDER ON THE LADY GHISLAINE

IN HIS lavish office on the 24th floor of the headquarters of the Mutual Provident Life Association, Sir Hector Prune was looking at a file marked MAXWELL with a furrowed brow.

"This could mean the biggest accident claim in our company's history," he said to his assistant, Mr Archibald Wetherington. "There is £20 million at stake here, unless we can prove that it was suicide."

"But he was murdered, Sir. Everyone knows that. It even says so in the *Daily Telegraph*," Wetherington replied.

Both men stared at each other gloomily. Then the Chairman's assistant had a flash of inspiration. "I say, sir," he cried, "I've just had an idea. I sometimes go shooting with a chap called Hastings. Pretty dim sort of fellow."

"Oh yes," replied Sir Hector, "he's the editor of the *Telegraph*, isn't he?"

"No, sir, another chap called Hastings. He works for that very famous Belgian detective, Hercule Poirot. You've probably seen him on television."

"Yes, Wetherington, so what are you suggesting?"

"Well, sir, I thought I might give him a ring..."

—☆—

THE well-groomed figure of Poirot sat sipping a glass of anise outside the famous Cafe de Noel Coward on the colourful quayside of the old port in Tenerife.

"Jolly hot," said his companion, Captain Hastings, loosening his heavy tweed overcoat a couple of buttons.

Poirot did not reply. He was already deep in thought. Finally he fixed his friend with a quizzical smile.

"Most curious, Hastings, eez it not, zat ze last known words of Monsieur Maxwell were to give ze order for ze air-conditioning to be turned down? And yet, as you can see, eet eez very hot 'ere."

To emphasise the point he took a large scarlet handkerchief from his top pocket and brushed the drops of perspiration from his immaculately waxed moustache.

"Furzer, 'astings, ze great tycoon ate 'is last meal in zis very restaurant, at ze very next table to where we are sitting. And look, it is set for *two* persons. Curious, eez it not, mon brave?"

As usual Hastings was finding it rather difficult to follow the great man's train of thought.

"Surely, Poirot, the whole thing's pretty damned obvious. Chap's business affairs getting into a spot of bother. Lot of chaps saying he's a bit dodgy. Takes a holiday to get away from it all. Gets depressed. Chucks himself overboard."

"We shall see, 'astings, we shall see," was Poirot's enigmatic reply.

—☆—

INSPECTOR Knackeros of the Guardia di Tenerife guided the little launch with deft skill alongside the sparkling white bulwarks of the luxurious yacht, the Lady Ghislaine.

Poirot shivered slightly as they clambered up onto the deck of the doom-laden vessel.

"You could have saved yourself the trouble, Señor," said the inspector, flashing a smile with his stained teeth.

"It was natural causes. An open and shut case. You see, here is where the Englishman fell over the side. It was his favourite spot. He would often sit here in the early morning, with no clothes on, reading a copy of his life story by Joseph Haines. They are eccentric, the Ingleesh, no?"

While the policeman explained his theory as to how the mystery which had baffled the world had come about, Poirot was on his hands and knees minutely examining the well-scrubbed deck.

A careful observer might have noted Poirot placing a huge half-finished pot of caviar labelled FINEST BELUGA — FOR KGB USE ONLY into his handkerchief.

"You won't find anything there, sir," broke in the commanding tones of Captain Goodfellow RN. "My lads have been over the whole ship from top sail to bilges with a fine-tooth comb."

"They haven't found anything at all," insisted a tanned Scandinavian girl in a bikini who had just come up the companion-way from the Master Cabin.

Hastings cast an appreciative eye over her shapely form, undoing another button of his overcoat.

"Ah," said the Captain, "let me introduce you gentlemen to Miss Ingrid Smorgesbord. She was helping Mr Maxwell with some important... er... research."

But Poirot's attention had already been drawn to a black balaclava secreted behind a lifebelt on the bulkhead above him.

"What do you make of zees, 'astings?" said the great detective. "A woolly 'at wiz ze letters M-O-S-S clearly visible."

"Perhaps it was hired from Moss Bros, Poirot," Hastings offered.

"Per'aps, 'astings. We shall see," Poirot replied. "I sink eet eez time to exercise ze little grey cells n'est-ce pas?"

—☆—

LATER, in the luxury stateroom, Poirot was questioning the twenty-four members of the crew. As he cast his expert eye round their faces, he felt a twinge of familiarity.

Didn't that deckhand there, in his matelot's cap and plainly false moustache, bear an uncanny resemblance to the former Ambassador to Washington, Sir Peter Jaybotham?

And the shifty-looking stoker in the corner? He could easily be mistaken for Joe Haines, the celebrated political commentator.

And what about the fair-haired barman with glasses? Didn't he look remarkably like Nick Davies, the discredited former *Mirror* Foreign Editor and international arms dealer?

The Captain broke into Poirot's reflections with a dismissive laugh. "You're wasting your time, Poirot, if you think any of us did it. We all loved him like a father, didn't we boys?"

The members of the crew immediately took out onions from their pockets and began to weep inconsolably.

Poirot's eyes narrowed. This was becoming a most interesting case.

Hastings, deeply moved, undid another button of his tweed overcoat.

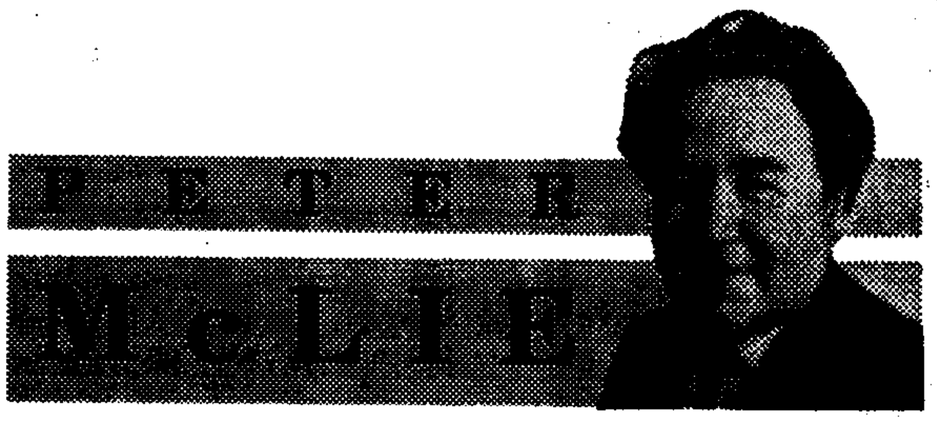
(To be continued)

Yes, it's BR's latest gimmick to try to make some money this Christmas. Hire your own train and eat Christmas dinner as you travel the network in the comfort of the BR Buffet Car.

The Yuletide Sizzler

Non-Starters
(subject to availability)
Soup-er Saver
– ❋ –
Complete Turkey
with
Had Your Chips and Frozen Points
plus
Gravy From The Train
– ❋ –
For Vegetarians:
Leaves On Track
– ❋ –
Commuters' Hard Cheese
– ❋ –
Wrong Sort Of Snow Pudding
– ❋ –
HST or Network Expresso Coffee
– ❋ –
No Service After Eights
– ❋ –
Accompanied by
Champagne in the Neck
or
Vin Ordinary Return
– ❋ –
Menu Terminates Here

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT
All Yuletide Specials are cancelled owing to shortage of rolling stock.



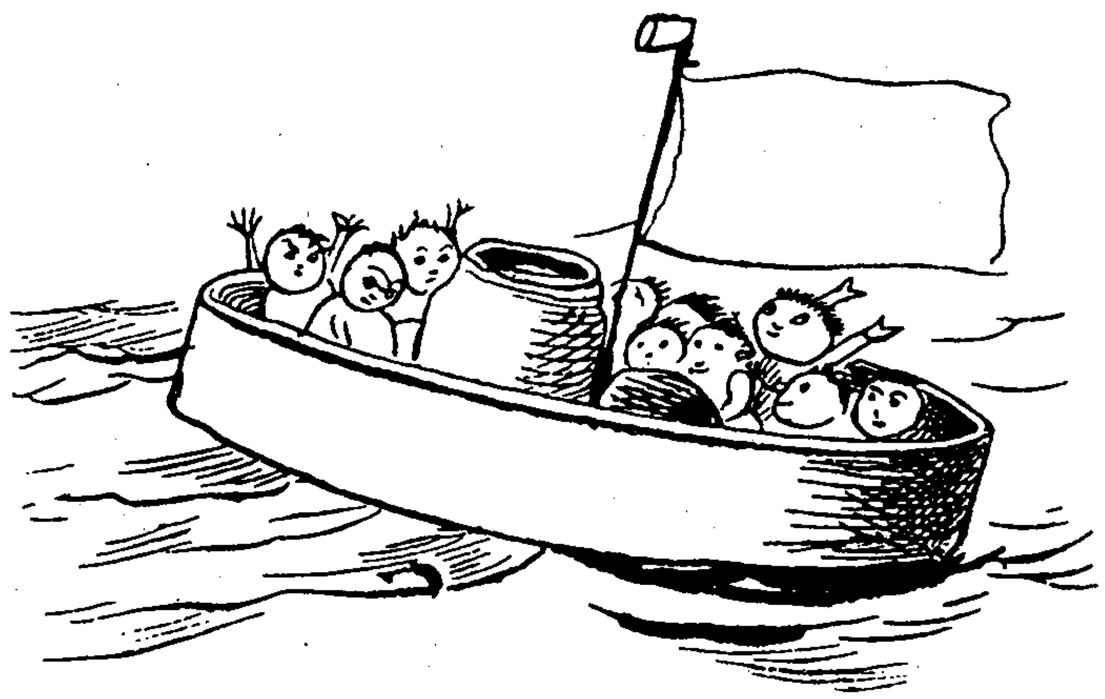
The World's Worst Columnist

The man you don't hear much about nowadays

HAVE YOU noticed that in recent weeks there has been scarce a mention in the media of Robert Maxwell? There was a time not so long ago when you could scarcely open a newspaper, or turn on the television, without hearing of the doings of this colourful Fleet Street character.

I wonder what on earth is going on?

☐ **HAVE you noticed that Christmas invariably falls on the same date each year?**
Why should this be?
(You're fired. Ed.)



BOAT PEOPLE TO BE REPATRIATED

by Our Nonsense Staff E. Lear

PROTESTS mounted today as a large number of so-called Jumblies were ordered to return home after their illegal immigration to the Lands of the Western Sea.

Having survived a perilous journey in a craft which was little more than a sieve, the Jumblies were said to be furious at their enforced repatriation to the Far and Few Lands where they originally lived.

"This is racism," said one spokesman. "Just because our heads are green and our hands are blue, no one wants to know."

An official denied this, and said that the Jumblies were not genuine refugees and that the Sieve-People were in fact economic migrants.

"They have already bought an owl, a useful cart, a pound of rice and a cranberry tart," he said. "Not to mention bees, a pig, some green jackdaws and a lovely monkey with lollipop paws."

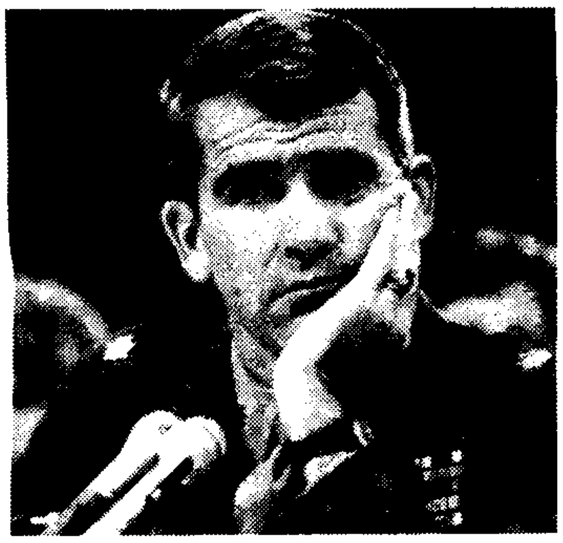
The Jumblies return to an uncertain future at home, convinced that no one "cares a button or gives a fig".

Edward Lear is 107.

TV CHOICE

BBC1 8.00 pm

Panorama With Wogan



Tonight's guest is Colonel Oliver North, who talks about his new book *I Lied And That's The Truth* (published by The Uncle Sam Bible Press, New Applepiesville, price $789.38). Colonel North gives an exclusive interview to BBC Television in which he answers tough questions about his new book and points the finger at the bookshops where it is available.

Channel 4 8.30 pm

Whose Show Is It Anyway?

New panel game in which Clive Anderson, Tony Slattery, Mike McShane, Josie Lawrence, Sandy Toksvig and Paul Merton have to guess whose show they are on. Is it their own or are they just guests on someone else's? Is it improvised, or is one of them writing the script for the others? With special appearance by John Sessions.

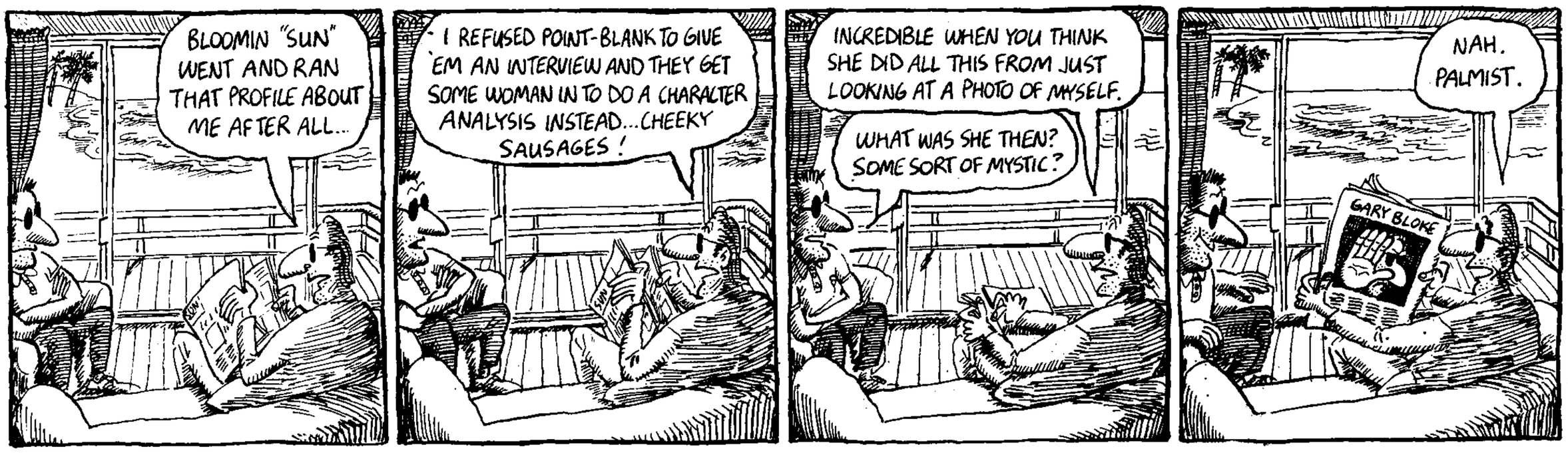
(An Old Trick Production for Channel 4)

Great Bores Of Today.

"... if you ask me it was definitely the Russians he got in out of his depth there's no way it was suicide he wasn't like that and what about the mystery yacht? they were shadowing him all the way and why were all the doors closed on the boat? no it's obvious when you consider the speed they rushed through the autopsy and there was no proper inquest which is suspicious in itself I've got a friend who's a doctor who says if a body is in the water that long it goes wrinkly and burns although no one positively identified the corpse except the family and why did they bury him so quickly? most experts reckon if you have a heart attack you fall backwards on deck not over the rail which is too high anyway we'll never know not now it'll be like Kennedy do you remember the grassy knoll and the man who was seen running away they never found him Lord Lucan there's another one anyway the captain gave conflicting reports about the time he went missing it was Mossad definitely..."

Celeb

LIGGER


BLOOMIN "SUN" WENT AND RAN THAT PROFILE ABOUT ME AFTER ALL...
I REFUSED POINT-BLANK TO GIVE 'EM AN INTERVIEW AND THEY GET SOME WOMAN IN TO DO A CHARACTER ANALYSIS INSTEAD...CHEEKY SAUSAGES!
INCREDIBLE WHEN YOU THINK SHE DID ALL THIS FROM JUST LOOKING AT A PHOTO OF MYSELF.
WHAT WAS SHE THEN? SOME SORT OF MYSTIC?
NAH. PALMIST.
GARY BLOKE

MOSCOW SENDS IN THE TROOPS

by Our Man In London Watching CNN
Gore B. Vidal

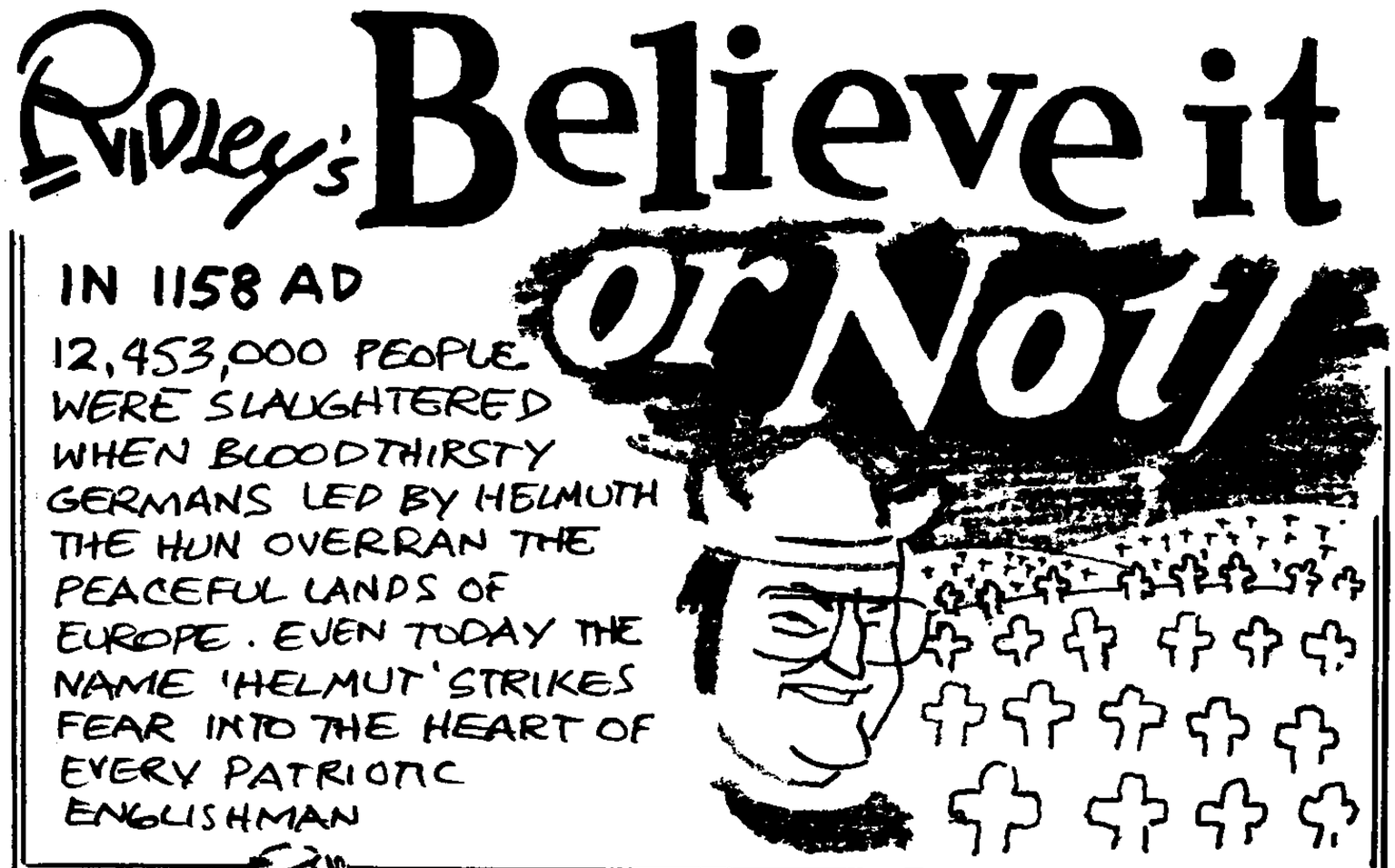
LAST NIGHT Russian tanks rolled into the tiny republic of Chechen-Ingushetia to crush its people's heroic bid to escape the iron grip of Moscow's 70-year rule.

Speaking on Moscow television, Mr Boris Yeltsin defended his crackdown on the rebellious Chechans, saying that "the integrity of our country must be preserved at all costs. It is the will of the Russian people that the authority of the centre should be obeyed. We can't have every ethnic group claiming the right to independence, or the whole thing will fall apart. It will be chaos. You must have a strong man in charge, keeping people in order. The authority of the Yeltsinist Party is paramount. Those who disobey our commands will be utterly and mercilessly crushed, to ensure that the glorious rule of Democratic Yeltsinism continues for a thousand years."

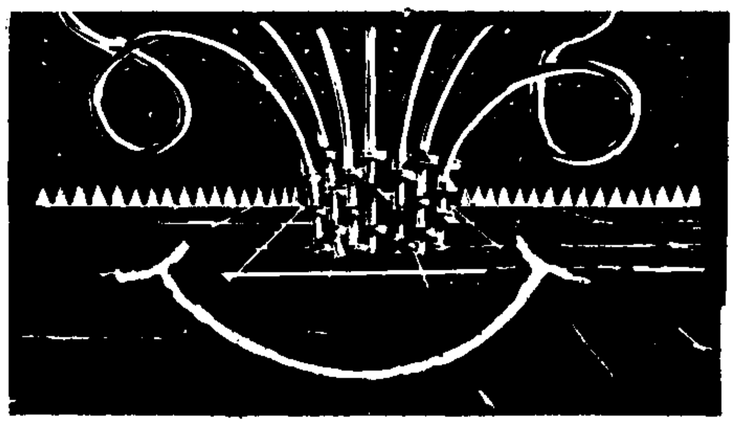
Mr Gorbachev was unavailable for comment last night, as he was appearing on the *Woganski Show* plugging his new book, *Coup — What A Scorcher.*

"It appears to be a genuine doormat circle"

"Why can't you use a nailfile like everyone else?"


RIDLEY'S
Believe it or Not
IN 1158 AD
12,453,000 PEOPLE WERE SLAUGHTERED WHEN BLOODTHIRSTY GERMANS LED BY HELMUTH THE HUN OVERRAN THE PEACEFUL LANDS OF EUROPE. EVEN TODAY THE NAME 'HELMUT' STRIKES FEAR INTO THE HEART OF EVERY PATRIOTIC ENGLISHMAN
SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT ALL GERMANS INHERIT A GENE (CHROSOME H) WHICH GIVES THEM AN OVERPOWERING URGE TO RULE THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHOSE NAMES BEGIN WITH 'H' - EG HITLER HIMMLER, HELMUTH AND DELORS.
INCREDIBLE THOUGH IT MAY SEEM, IN 1991 A FORMER BRITISH CONSERVATIVE CABINET MINISTER TOLD EVERYONE TO VOTE LABOUR. AMAZING!
RIDLEY
JK

DIARY



IMELDA MARCOS

Manila

It is indeed good that I should be granted asylum and sanctuary for my thoughts and philosophies in what I believe is a magazine of some humour. My late husband, President Ferdinand Marcos, had great humour, and he was much venerated by his nation for his love of laughter. Now when I visit his dear body each week in its beautiful fridge-freezer in the delightful Temples Memorial Park in Florida, I narrate him many jokes. One of his very favourites is:

Question: "When is a door not a door?"

Answer: "When it is open."

That makes Ferdinand Marcos laugh a lot, for, even though he is no longer with us, I employ gloves to move his Presidential lips up and down in the fridge-freezer, indicating that he is responding well to the many jokes from his darling Imelda.

The body of my dear husband Ferdinand brings much help and succour to the world, even in death. Ferdinand always say, there's succour born every minute, and this will be his lasting memorial. You want an instance, okay, you want one, I give it. On my last visit to his Memorial Park before my return to aid the poor and the suffering and to cherish the sick in my home country that has for so long cried out for my special care, I found myself in need badly of a drink to replenish my throat grown tired from prayer. So I send one of my little people out for a Coca-Cola. He returns with a can very warm and tepid, totally undrinkable, a disgrace, who does he think I am? I ask you.

It was then that I feel drawn, as if by God, to whom I have always shown great kindness and understanding, to the venerable right hand of my husband in his beautiful and homely fridge-freezer (decorated most excellently in the finest fully-washable fabric wallpaper from Harrods, London). His little finger, thin and beautifully cold, is hanging somewhat separate to the rest of his pretty hand. It is as if he is beckoning, trying to tell me something, most uncanny I assure you. So I take the warm can of Coca-Cola to his hand, have one of my little people pull off its ring-top, and without further ado I plunge Marcos's little finger deep into the can, keeping it there for three minutes. Result? A satisfying chilled drink, a great reviver for Imelda before her great voyage across the oceans to the people who so miss her in the land she so loves.

My paid accusers and their propagandists in the media go on about my shoes, on and on. Shoes, shoes, shoes — do they think of nothing else, these enemies of god? My people suffer from earthquakes and typhoons and all their enemies can think of to ask is shoes, always shoes. May I please clear up this shoes business for all and for once? My shoes were one small way in which I could help my country, for the poor and the starving and the young and the crippled would see my lovely shoes and it would make them so very happy. Is spreading happiness among the dying such a very terrible thing? I think no.

Well do I recall the look of joy on a young child's face at the Imelda Marcos Cash-Only Hospital for Poorly Children in Manila. I had asked this little girl, dying of malnutrition, if she would like to put on such shoes as I wore and walk around her ward before she went to meet the baby Jesus in Heaven.

"Oh yes, mom!" she exclaimed, for all the little children love to call me mom, that is how they see me.

"Then you'd better start saving or you won't get the chance!" I laughed and moved on, graciously, to commune with other patients. At that moment a beautiful sunbeam entered the ward, a symbol of the great spirit of hope and optimism I, Imelda Marcos, bring down to the ground wherever I visit.

A day or two later, the news came to me that the small child had died. In her little hand, so young, so cold, so skinny, she was found to be clutching a solitary cent.

Missing every meal, she had been saving for shoes just like mom's! Call me a "big softie" if you wish but I shed a tear, yes I did. This was such a touching story, so very moving, that I have now written a glorious song about it, *The Shoes of Love*, for the sight of my shoes gave this little angel something to hope for before she passed away. After informal banquets in my honour, I perform this warm song with piano accompaniment but only for close friends and business associates, and they too find it a very charming way to end a delightful evening. So let no one run down my shoes no more, okay. The matter is closed.

Those of us in leadership must learn to understand that we are the instruments of God's grace to help realise man's fulfilment. I believe that the rich can teach the poor so many, many things. For instance, would a poor man know the correct way to eat asparagus and caviar from Harrods, London, available by post? Of course he would not and no wonder he is starving if he will never be bothered to learn! When I see a poor man starving in Manila, I teach him not to feel too guilty about it, not to worry so much about all the trouble he is causing and this is why the poor in the gutter look up to their Imelda as she passes by.

Mother Teresa is an example of my philosophy. What would she be doing with fine dresses, and jewellery, and exquisite perfumes? Wasted on her. She wouldn't know what to do with them. I tell you, the lady, she has no *style*, no dress-sense, no small-talk, no contacts, nothing. Totally wasted. You introduce Mother Teresa to world-renowned international celebrities and very dear friends like George Hamilton or Nancy Reagan, and she wouldn't party, not at all, she would sit in a corner with her beads and a book looking all gloomy and wanting out. But someone has to do it, so it is left to poor Imelda to look after the riches for her people. My people know that I bear this burden of wealth for them and them alone on my shoulders and on my feet and always in secret so as not to cause them worries, and this is why they feel such very deep gratitude, and everywhere wish to shower me with gifts. Everywhere I go, I hear them shout, "SHOO! SHOO!" It warms my heart to think that after all this time my footwear is still giving them such joy, such solace, such peace, and that still I remain Their Beloved Imelda.

People in Preston ward are invited to a meeting at 7.15pm tonight in St Mary's Church Hall, Surrenden Road, Brighton, to meet councillors and beat police officers.

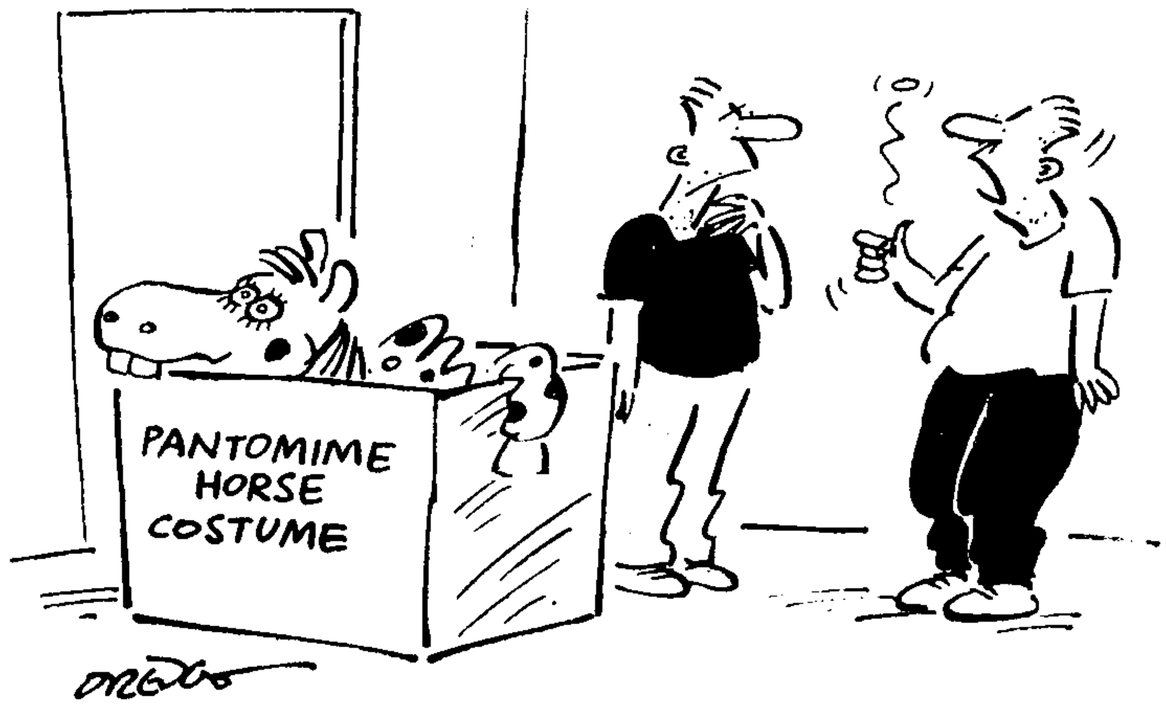
Evening Argus

A 17-YEAR-OLD youth was recovering in hospital today after being shot in the legs in Friendly Street, Belfast just after midnight.

Belfast Telegraph

Gay couple seeking new friends in Beds, Herts, Bucks. For easy evenings.

Spare Rib



"Heads or tails?"

Literary Review

Second helpings of coq

The New Joy of Sex
Alex Comfort
(Mitchell Beazley, £17.99)

HERE'S A triumph of the book-packager's art. No artefact was ever more embarrassingly redolent of its period than *The Joy of Sex*. Yet here it is, slightly tarted up and more than trebled in price, back on the bestseller list nearly 20 years after it was first published.

Alex Comfort wrote this instruction manual in two weeks in 1972. It sold more than eight million copies and founded the fortunes of Naim Attallah's Quartet Books — largely on account of the many scratchy drawings of a hideous long-haired brute with a beard and a dopey expression, industriously poking away in various postures at an equally blissed-out bint with a beehive. These were the first such illustrations to be respectable, perhaps because it was obvious nobody could possibly look at them for pleasure.

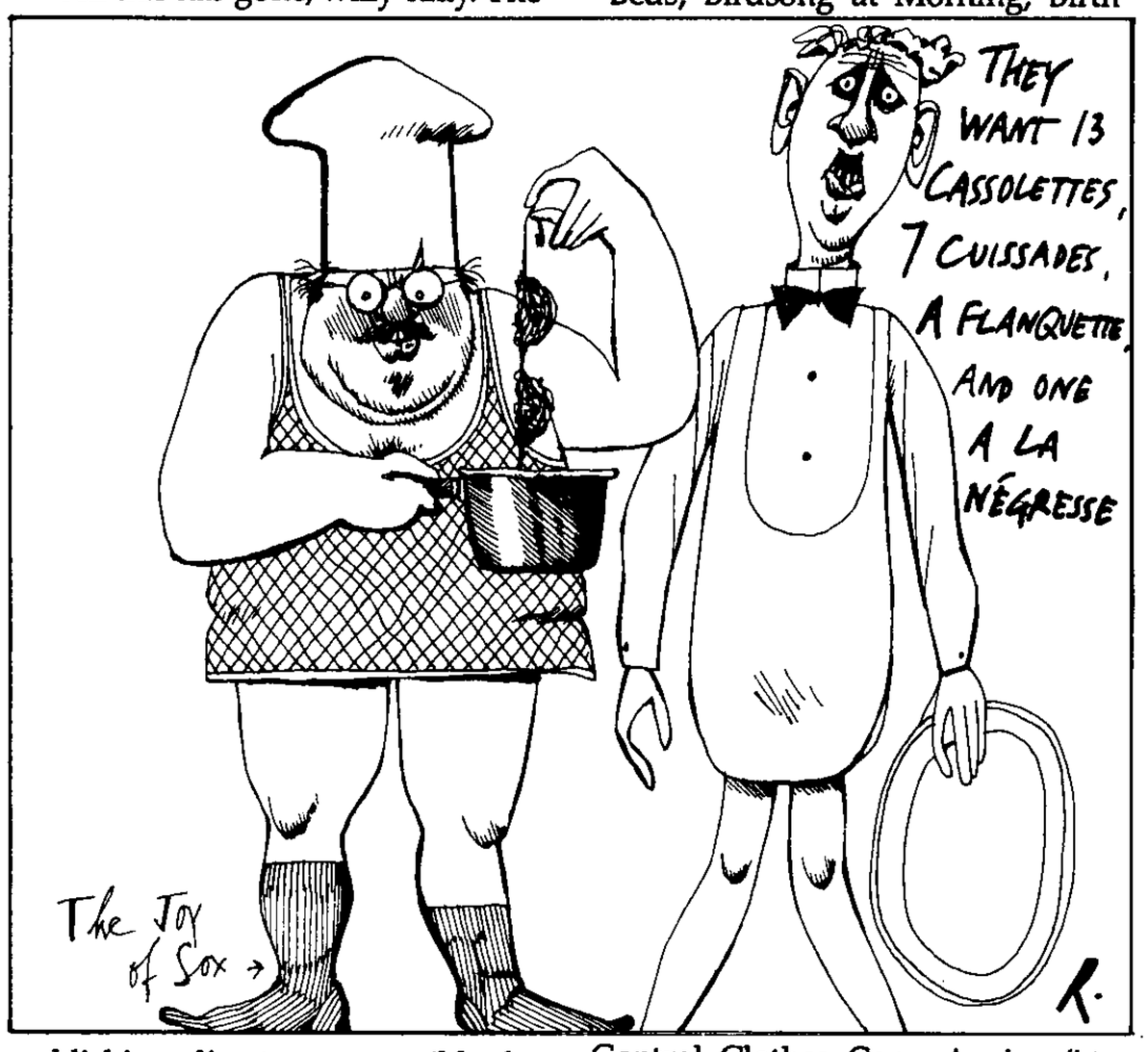
Comfort's other artful dodge was to disguise his book as a bistro. He presented the information in the form of a menu, with "starters", "main courses", and repulsively, "sauces and pickles". Lots of crappy French words were thrown in to make you feel you'd had a real night out: *cassolette, cuissade, flanquette, feuille de rose, pattes d'araignée, coq au vin*, and the like.

At a stroke or two, Alex Comfort became the Robert Carrier of bonking; the middle classes' guide to the rich dishes of the continent, or how to follow *soixante-neuf* with *blanquette de veau*. He hardly needed to argue the case for more sexual experimentation: by choosing these metaphors he had sidestepped the forces of repression, instantly taking sex out of the context of ethics into the realm of treats you really ought to try.

You don't hear so much of Robert Carrier now, most people having realized that it's not good for you to tip too much cream into your casserole. The same obscurity should by rights have descended on Alex Comfort, for the same reason.

In the first edition, Comfort was blithely saying that "venereal diseases could be stamped out altogether in our generation if people stopped treating them as a special case, and if nobody had a vested interest in them as a deterrent." Perversion, other than "digging up corpses or committing lust murder", wasn't a useful category then, except to describe puritans. Anal intercourse was worth a try ("there are lovers who vastly enjoy it") as were "foursomes and moresomes" ("we see no early reason why pairs of friends shouldn't make love together... the bisexual element is an important turn-on in all swapping...")

All this has gone, willy-nilly. The publishing director responsible for the new edition hopefully maintains, however, that far from being "The New Joy of Celibacy", "the book is as wild and funny as it ever was", and the pictures illustrate "more fancy positions than ever".



Indeed, it has been ingeniously touched up. For the first time there is a set of artily baffling black-and-white photos, of a pair feigning rapture. There are new drawings (in colour now to do the red bits proud) of a new couple. He is blond, muscular, clean-shaven, a lot more intent; she has masses more hair and a great big smirk.

There have been many surreptitious little adjustments. The book no longer bears the wondrously naff subtitle, "A Gourmet Guide to Lovemaking". Instead in tiny type, among the publishing information, there is a warning about AIDS which amounts to a legal disclaimer of the whole thing: "The advice and/or information included in this book should be considered in the light of present understanding of such health risks. The reader is advised to consult a physician about these risks."

All the sections have been quietly rearranged. "Starters" are now called "appetizers", perhaps in recognition that appetites are flagging; "Sauces" now arrive without pickles, for weaker stomachs. "Fidelity" which used to come at the end among the "Problems", is now at the beginning, among the "Ingredients". "Anal intercourse", meanwhile, has been moved from "Sauces & Pickles" to "Health and other Issues". The list of opening topics has altered from "Beds, Birdsong at Morning, Birth Control, Clothes, Come Again..." to "Love, Fidelity, Safe Sex, Tenderness..."

Some indefensibles have been silently dropped altogether, such as "Buttered bun", the yucky, though still culinary name offered for "a woman who has recently had relations with another man". Comfort's remark on condoms — "many people dislike the feeling of no contact" — has disappeared too, whether or not it remains true. Even alcohol is out these days. "If you're serious about sex, stay with Perrier water."

In a page on "The Implications of AIDS", Comfort puts the best face on it all. "There is no occasion for panic, or for losing out on the joy of sex — simply for informed caution. A crimp on the candy-store exploitation of sexual freedom may give us time and motive to redevelop its affectionate side. Now read on." It's a piece of fantastic hypocrisy. No author did more to encourage the candy-store view of sex than Comfort himself, in this very book — and this edition is full of the same recipes, however reshuffled. Only now some of the candy is poisonous.

Books & Bookmen

ALTHOUGH Fatty Cheetham (now rapidly diminishing in girth) was only dismissed by human hair conditioner Albert Vitale the day after the Booker Prize dinner — Vitale having been in London in the confident belief that one of Random Century's three shortlisted authors out of six would scoop up the prize, which Ben Okri conveniently did — Fatty's downfall had been planned months earlier.

Alberto realised that if Fatty were persuaded to walk the plank his editor wife Rosie, who had made so many of Century's ghastly bestsellers, would resign in protest, and this has now happened. Less than two months ago she had been appointed publisher of the Century division of the group, and also of the paperback Arrow imprint. Thus it was no coincidence that two HarperCollins evacuees, Kate Parkin and Andy McKillop, had already been bribed to Random Century, were already in place, and were immediately appointed to the defecting Rosie's two jobs.

To add to the confusion, ex-HarperCollins publisher Simon King, made redundant by Eddie Arturo McBastard Bell a year ago, has rapidly been crowned managing director of the Hutchinson imprint in place of the promoted Gail Rebuck, now unlikely ever to be the third Mrs Anthony Cheetham. The surprise in King's appointment is that he knows a book if he encounters one. Simon, of course, is Parkin and McKillop's old boss. He is the third person to be offered the job in a month but, being out of work, could hardly afford to refuse. Besides which, he shouldn't find Gail any more difficult to cope with than Arturo.

The next major defection from an increasingly Random Century could be Simon Master, who was to all intents and purposes deputy to Fatty and had assumed for some time that in due course he'd land the top job.

Publishing's golden middle-agies are certainly resurfacing. Another dismissed HarperCollins editorial director, Carol O'Brien, is happily ensconced at Simon & Schuster, who in 1993 will launch Pocket Books in the UK, yet another mass-market paperback list we don't need. Philippa Harrison must regret having accepted the Cap'n's shilling and taken the top job at Macdonald as, presumably, if Kevin and Ian can find a buyer, Maxwell's remaining book publishing houses will become but downmarket imprints in an even larger empire.

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
I HOPE ALL THESE MAXWELL BOOKS AREN'T TASTELESS ATTEMPTS TO CASH IN ON A PERSONAL TRAGEDY!
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT OURS IS
THE ULTIMATE MAXWELL BOOK

Brussels Sprouts

Spend, spend, spend

WHILE the British Conservatives desperately try to paper over the cracks splitting the party on Europe before next month's Maastricht summit, the European Commission blithely continues its work: overseeing the loss — it knows not where — of millions upon millions of pounds worth of European taxpayers' money.

That the non-elected Brussels technocrats are incapable of communicating with big-spending agencies like the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Development Fund (EDF) is well known to *Eye* readers; now it seems the community can't even communicate with its own member governments judging by a £4 billion-plus fiasco in Italy.

Two major cock-ups illustrate the profligate inefficiency.

In the first, it appears that Italy has spent *nine trillion lira* of community "aid" — around £4.22 billion — but can't or won't say exactly where it has gone. Italy has now been accused of misusing the aid funds and has been served notice not to spend any more.

It seems that in the period up until 1988 Italy's Eurocrats, known for their originality in matters of finance, shelled out on what they called "miscellaneous aid", details of which remain totally obscure. When questioned by Euro officials, the Italocrats simply said they had decided to administer aid transactions for industrial development under the Law of the Region of Sicily — a well-known bastion of financial probity.

The result is that there are apparently no details of any of the projects, their amount, when money was given, to whom, why or even how it was administered.

True to form, Euro officials did not look into the affair properly until months after the money had been spent, believing that since the requisite legal work had not been filed no money was being spent. In fact the Italians had actually spent a total of 11 trillion lira — about £5.35 billion.

EC officials found the "Sicilian law" to be a labyrinth of intricate provisions and regulations relating to industry and public and private bodies. It provided for all sorts of grants, loan interest subsidies, advances of funds, guarantees and endowment funds for public bodies and industry, as well as every conceivable type of subsidised loan.

Commission officials considered this vast panoply of "aid" could threaten trade between member states and "create a distortion of competition contrary to the common interest". They requested more information, which has not been forthcoming. Now, because of the increase in allegedly illegal aid grants, the Italian Government has been reminded that a member country can be forced to return aid granted unlawfully.

Further afield, meanwhile, and even more worryingly, a report by the European Court of Auditors shows the Euro commissioners guilty of breathtaking incompetence in "overseeing" the doling out of nearly four billion ECUs (about £2.8 billion) in preferential aid to countries fringing the Mediterranean like Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt.

The report highlights:

● The "disappearance" of 190 million ECUs (around £134 million) given to Turkey for the Karakaya hydro-electric complex, Elbistan thermal power station and Beypazari lignite mines.

● The indiscriminate transfer in Morocco of 24 million ECU (around £17 million) from one project to another at almost one third more than its real cost.

● The loss of another 4.3 million ECU (around £3 million) on a project taken over by the Moroccan authorities after the commission "forgot" to take into account the drop in the value of the dinar.

● The loss of files; confused bank accounts; and officers in charge only occasionally keeping handwritten notes — when they kept notes at all.

In **Turkey**, vast sums were poured into the Elbistan power station in 1983, which only began to function nine years later. The situation worsened when Turkey doubled her intended production figures at the start of one project, which meant three times more money had to be invested than first planned. As the project's sole promoters, the Eurocrats were so overwhelmed by their new task they completely forgot to file any of the details of the changes.

In trying to unravel the affair, the auditors concluded: "A check on records at the commission does not allow the effectiveness of community aid to Turkey to be assessed for lack of the necessary information. It is not even possible to determine what exactly the 160 million ECU [about £112.7 million] spent on the Karakaya Hydroelectric Complex and Elbistan Power station by the European Investment Bank was used to finance."

In **Morocco**, meanwhile, where six projects are being funded, locals were confused by the commission's credit operation, designed to benefit small farmers. This was because nobody had been put in charge of it and the commission had not told its delegations what they should do with the money. Officers involved later said they thought it was being managed by the European Investment Bank.

Indeed, confusion between the commission and the EIB in Morocco could be seen from the start when both agreed to finance a project on the basis of their respective cost estimates — which differed by a cool 21 million ECUs (£15 million).

While the EIB is the community's official bank, uses the ECU as its currency and is supposed to be supervised by the commission, the EDF has a separate political structure and looks after its own funds (between 1985 and 1990, these amounted to 7.4 billion ECU or £3.6 billion).

Weary auditors, making spot checks on some 43 aid projects, found neither the EIB, the EDF, nor the commission had any idea who was responsible for what. Indeed, confusion was such that some projects had nobody in charge of them at all.

Electricity

Power mad

THE biggest electricity users, led by ICI and British Steel, are demanding that prices be brought down and are threatening to invoke the powers of the Office of Fair Trading, the Monopolies Commission and the Department of Trade and Industry — the whole government machine — against the generators National Power and PowerGen.

They are overlooking just one detail: the biggest shareholder in NatPowerGen is the Government itself which enjoys a good income from its dividends.

While the big companies, members of the Major Electricity Users' Council, once agitated against nationalisation and for privatisation, they make their own contracts with the generators but are in fact in the same boat as small consumers.

In the name of privatisation, they have been handed over to what is in reality a private duopoly and difficult to distinguish from a full-blown monopoly. While domestic consumers cannot choose which one they prefer, the big consumers can sign up with either company, but it makes little difference which they choose.

Following the fiasco over nuclear power, which the City said it would not buy at any price, the Government held back 40 percent of the industry and settled for partial privatisation. Now it is in the embarrassing position of owning 40 percent of a key utility which enjoys a monopoly situation and is screwing the rest of British industry.

It took a Labour government to make nationalisation a dirty word and the Tories have done the same for privatisation — not just with the general public but now with its own big business backers.

National Power makes an annual profit of £479 million and has given its chairman John Baker a 58 per cent rise. It has sacked 2,000 staff and another 3,000 are to go. The invaluable research laboratory at Leatherhead is to be closed, and the filthiest fuel of all, orimulsion, is to be burnt. All of this will enhance profits still further.

PowerGen, meanwhile, has given its chairman Ed Wallis a 163 per cent rise, cut 1,100 jobs and produced a profit of £272 million. Both companies are appealing to the Department of the Environment to be allowed to keep secret the statistics about their pollution emissions, claiming the information would help competitors. But they don't have any competitors.

While both generators are demanding an increase in pool prices, which govern the price at which they sell electricity to the public, internal morale is rock bottom. What keeps the industry functioning is that the staff, facing repeated waves of redundancy, belong to unions that enjoy a sweetheart relationship with the managements.

Oil

Pretty Richfield

VERY little space was afforded to the report of the Scottish Sheriff Principal, Ronald Ireland, into the blow-out on the Atlantic Richfield/Odeco oil rig Ocean Odyssey in 1989.

The *Eye* has regularly reported on the disaster but could not quite anticipate the extent of the negligence and bloody-mindedness of the oil companies exposed in the report — "a reckless disregard for the safety of the men on board the rig" was how Ireland put it.

The high point of the rig management's behaviour came when the offshore installations manager ordered Tim Williams out of the lifeboat, where he was safely installed, and back in to the radio room to "monitor" messages when the rig was engulfed in fire and completely out of control. Tim Williams then died because of the recklessness of the management.

Unabashed by the sheriff's devastating attack, Atlantic Richfield sent its army of public relations officers on to the offensive, slamming the sheriff for taking a harsh view of the company after it had shown the inquiry such "close co-operation". These words brought a hollow laugh from anyone who was at the inquiry and recalled that the main witness for the management refused to attend. Mel Miller, Atlantic Richfield's senior drilling manager in the North Sea and a crucial witness, was "retired" and sent home to California only weeks before the inquiry opened.

While making it impossible for senior staff to attend the inquiry, Atlantic Richfield ordered their expensive barristers to shift the blame for the explosion on to the oil rig workers who had suffered in it. Several crucial witnesses, some of them burned for life, were systematically bludgeoned in the witness box in the way that only top British QCs (their vast oil company fees safe in their pockets) know how.

Atlantic Richfield and Odeco still continue operations in the North Sea in the manner to which they had grown accustomed on the Ocean Odyssey. Last year Odeco was awarded the British Safety Council's Silver Dagger Safety Award. Even as Sheriff Ireland's report was being publicised, Atlantic Richfield was bringing hydrogen-sulphide contaminated gas to the surface from a well bore at a rig off Yarmouth at dead of night — in complete contravention of the regulations.

North Sea production is the only area of the British economy not in slump — the Government depends on it entirely. This fact is published as a favour to all those who still believe there is the slightest chance the Lord Advocate of Scotland, Lord Fraser — fresh from demanding the heads of two Libyans for the Lockerbie disaster — will ever consider prosecuting Atlantic Richfield or Odeco for the murder (or manslaughter) of Tim Williams.

In the City

AMID the frenzied outpourings of the overworked rumour mill and theory factory since Robert Maxwell's death, at least one matter is clear: there were enough aspects of his business affairs, in particular his share dealing and the internecine relationships of his public and private companies with their overly generous bankers, to justify his old friends at the Department of Trade & Industry taking more than a passing interest.

The problem was always that a live Maxwell was a little too much for the men of Timidity & Inaction to handle. And a dead Maxwell, while more their size, removes the target of any inquiries. So while the DTI has been making investigative noises for some months, it has not gone very far and seems even less likely now to press ahead.

Since at least last year Maxwell was effectively manipulating if not supporting the share price of Maxwell Communications with borrowed money: a recipe that always ends in tears for shareholders, if not jail for the manipulator.

What other purpose was there in the "put" option deals with his main Wall Street squeeze, Goldman Sachs? The alternative dustbin men, whose investigators have such a seeming close interest in their opponents' garbage, would surely not have been paying over the odds for 59 million MCC shares between August 1990 and February this year unless they knew they had a buyer. Given the somewhat too discreet Goldman was one of the major market makers in MCC and still hold a 24 million slug of MCC as security for loans, it might seem that they could have even financed the purchases.

These deals prevented MCC shares hitting the market and pressuring the price even lower thereby triggering margin calls on the major loans Maxwell had secured on his MCC holding. Such margin calls when not met can trigger a meltdown in the price, as was seen in Polly Peck when Asil Nadir was unable to meet demands for more security.

Maxwell and his bankers always knew this was a potential doomsday development which could destabilise the pyramid of debt. With MCC now around 60p, it can be seen why those banks holding MCC shares should cooperate.

The only problem is that not everyone was in on the game. MCC shareholders who wanted to sell or investors who wanted to buy MCC (not that they were thick on the ground) were not in full possession of the facts regarding the likely outlook for the shares. In other words there was a false market — as witness what happened once Goldman turned seller and the sole supporter was not there.

Perhaps the Stock Exchange should wake up and ask a few questions of those who participated in these effectively market-rigging exercises.

It would also seem that, once again as with Nadir and George Walker, not all the myriad banks lending to Maxwell were fully in the picture as regards what loans were secured on what assets by what banks. Some banks, it seems, fear they are less secured than they understood, perhaps because some assets are either worth less than imagined or possibly subject to rival claims.

Again these would normally be matters which would attract the attention of the DTI and possibly the Serious Fraud Office. But with Maxwell dead who is the target of any investigation? Surely not the heirs or the advisers. For everyone knew who ran MCC and the private companies. And dead Maxwell not only tells no tales and is beyond prosecution, but is appropriately the ultimate fall guy.

IN MEMORIAM

The Pergamon inspectors Sir Ronald Leach and Owen Stable were not the only early Maxwell experts to be right on the money about Cap'n Bob.

In 1968, before the Pergamon revelations, the then leading merchant banker, the late Sir Sigismund Warburg, explained why S.G. Warburg had refused to act for Maxwell. "He is a Jew who denies he is a Jew and who exploited other Jews," he remarked, recalling Maxwell's earliest entrepreneurial endeavours in post-war Germany.

But the man who said it all was none other than the canny Harold Wilson. When Prime Minister he kept his distance from Maxwell whom he nicknamed "the Bouncing Czech" — a deliberate and masterly play on words which encapsulated not only the relentless Maxwell bombast but his essential phoniness.

Robert Maxwell always ran his public companies as private companies. That was why the inspectors 20 years ago found him not fit and proper. *Plus ça change*, or whatever the Czech equivalent may be.

WHILE great interest has been displayed in contributions to the Tory Party from Greek and Hong Kong tycoons, no attention has been paid to the Hinduja brothers from India, best known perhaps for their alleged role in the Bofors bribes scandal there.

The Hindujas have long been close to Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher attended their celebrated annual London banquet. It has been suggested that they made contributions in the past of £25,000 to the Tories. But the Hindujas are nothing if not eclectic where political friends are concerned. Earlier this month their Diwali party was attended not only by Tory Party chairman Chris Patten but one N. Kinnock.

FORGIVENESS is a great virtue, so it is good to see the *Analyst* monthly newsletter trumpeting among its attractions contributions from Ian Restall as an "authoritative commentator" on small company investment.

He is presumably not related to the Ian Restall, once of brokers Grenfell and Rowe Rudd, who was suspended by the Stock Exchange for a month in 1976 over dealings on behalf of an *Investors Chronicle* journalist. Or to the Ian Restall who was associated with the broker at the heart of the "put-through" scandal involving Piccadilly Unit Trust two years later.

IT IS interesting to see that the Nash family has recruited former Yale & Valor chairman Michael Montague to its cause in bidding to get a boardroom say at Goode Durrant, the building and motor dealing group run by Michael Waring. No doubt when not contemplating Goode Durrant, Tim Nash and Montague have many similar interests to discuss, such as the attractions of San Francisco.

Meanwhile Waring will be hoping that the Customs will be satisfied with the provision that the company has had to make regarding certain VAT discrepancies discovered by its Laidlaw motor dealing subsidiary.

IT IS suggested that none other than "Black Jack" Dellal could have been the client of brokers Hitchens Harrison who took exception to "front running" by one of their dealers ahead of his share deals (*Eye* 779). If so, the Keyser Ullmann survivor's revenge, courtesy of the department of deliberate misinformation, is reckoned to have cost the firm up to £280,000 when the now ex-dealer zigged when he should have zagged and could not pay.

THE DEFEAT of Turkish president Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party in the recent elections could pose a problem for Polly Peck's Asil Nadir as he ponders his future — a forthcoming fraud trial on charges of stealing more than £150 million and the £1 billion claim from the Polly Peck administrators who have frozen his UK assets.

With Ozal's power curbed, a powerful ally and potential safe haven could be neutralised. The world is suddenly becoming very small indeed — the size of Northern Cyprus. However, even that sunny enclave could be more attractive than an ungrateful Britain with whom it has no extradition agreement.

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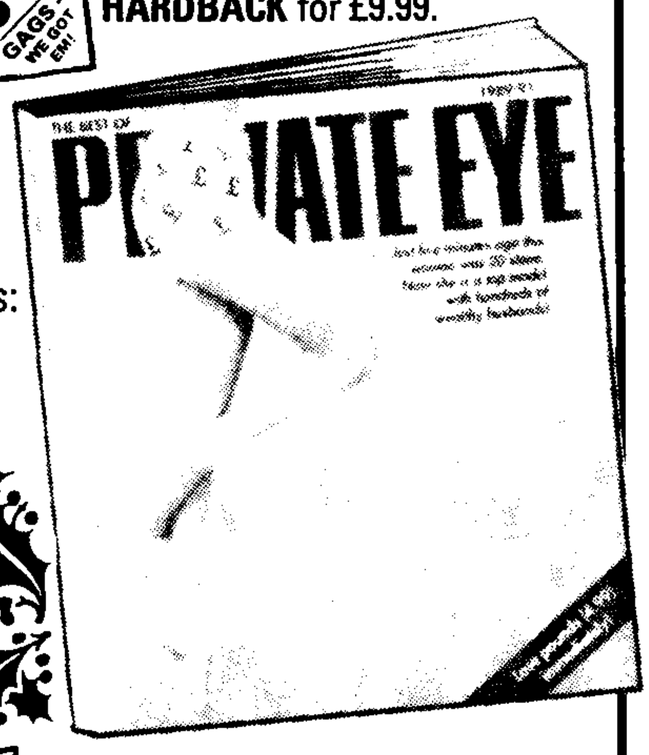

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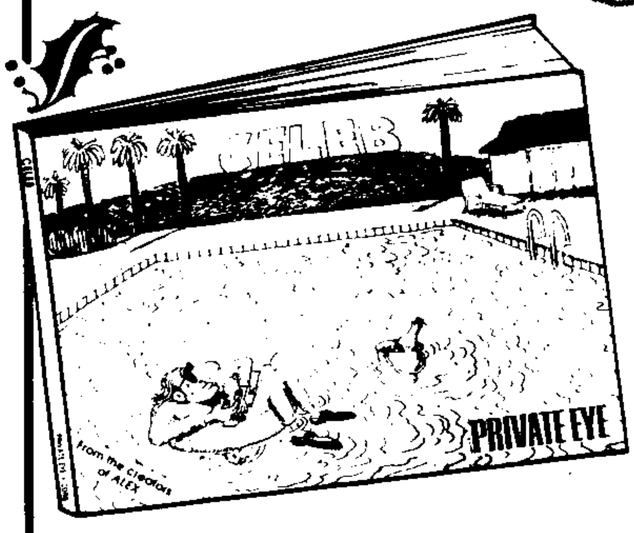

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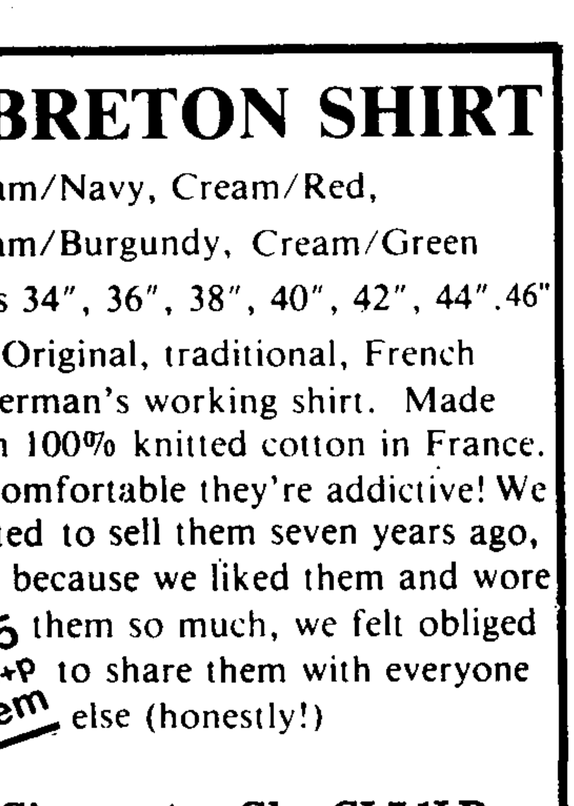

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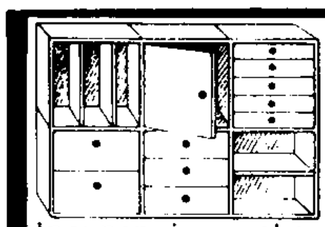

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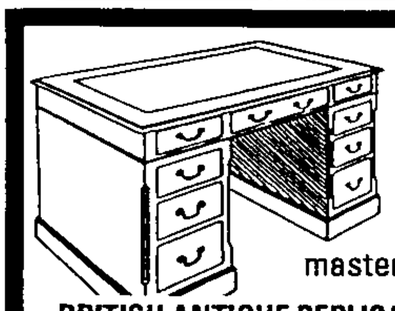

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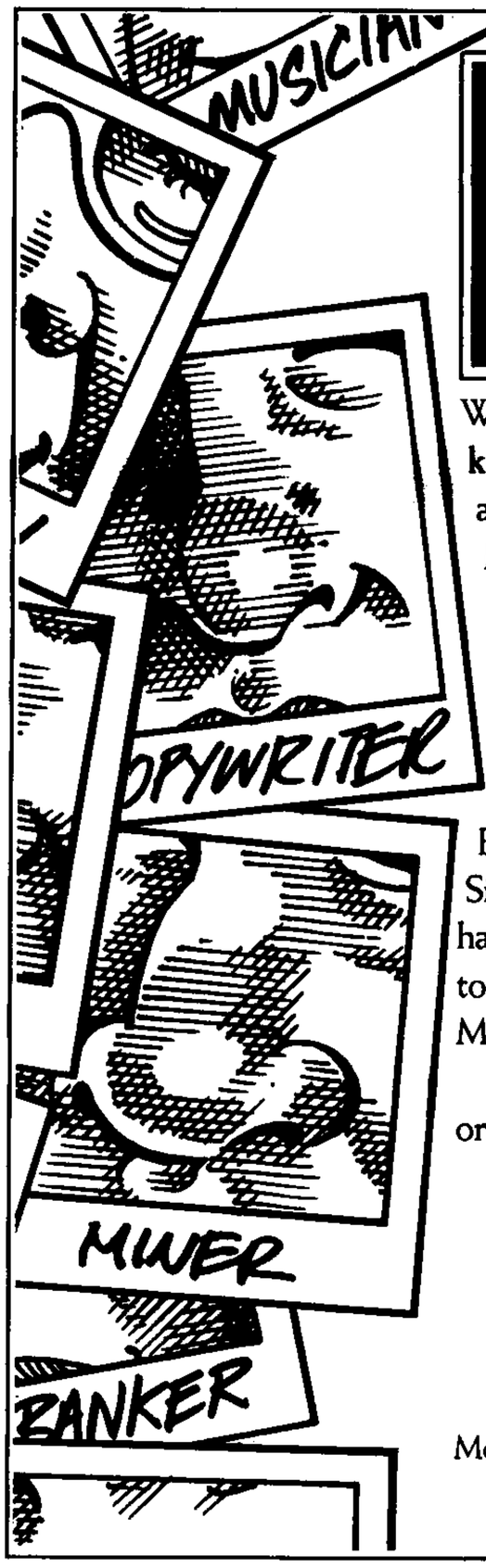

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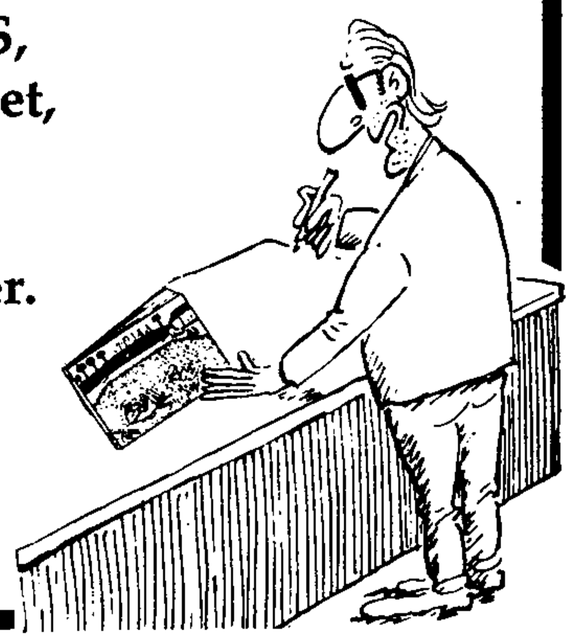

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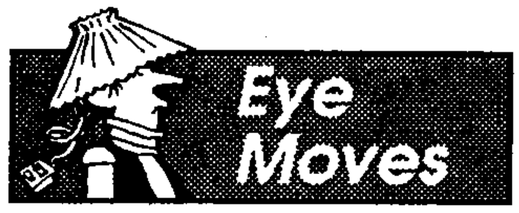

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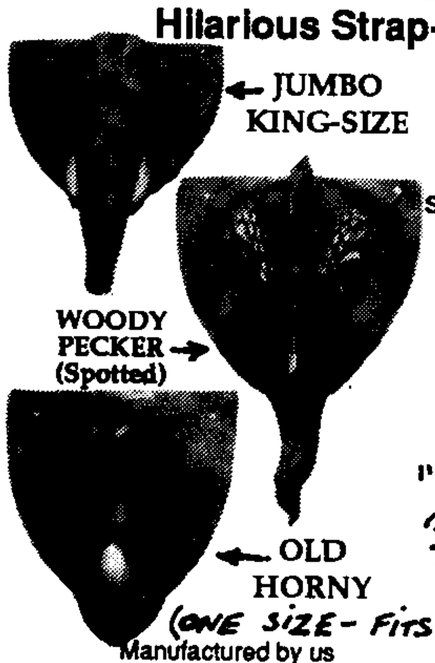

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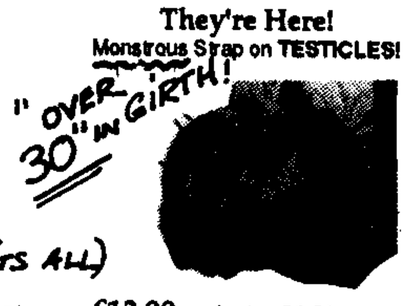

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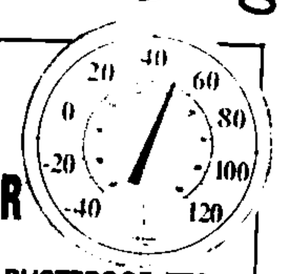

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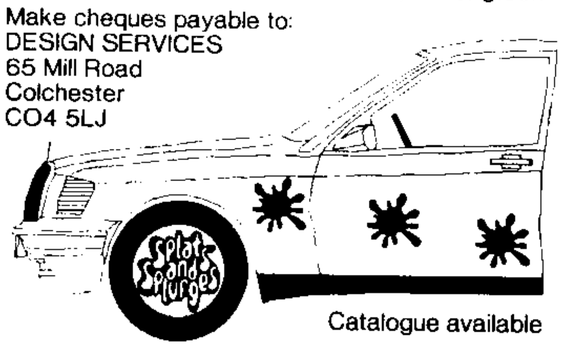

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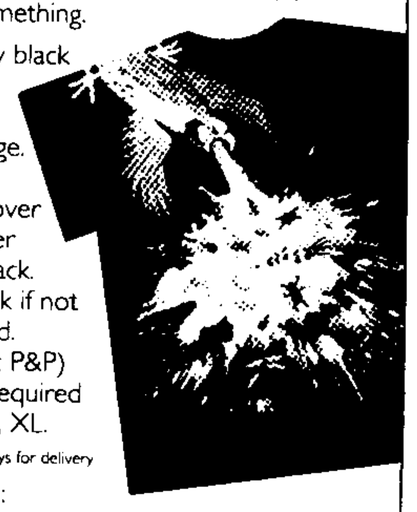

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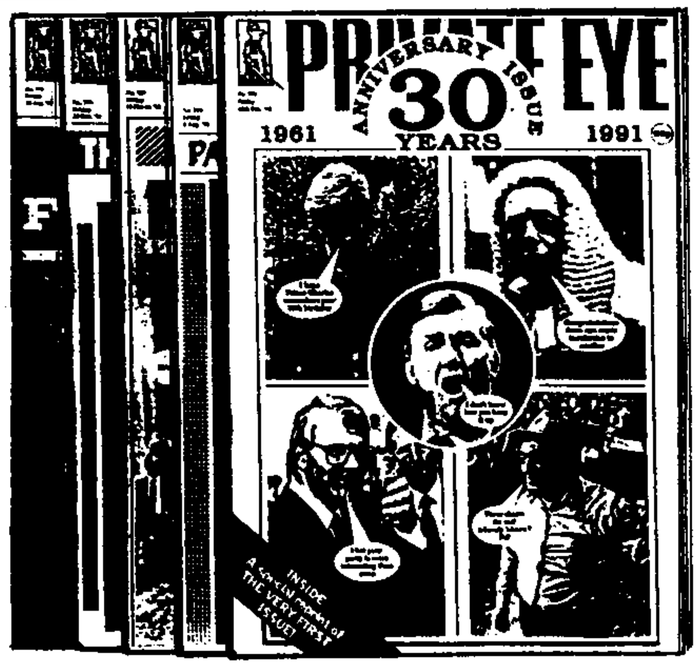

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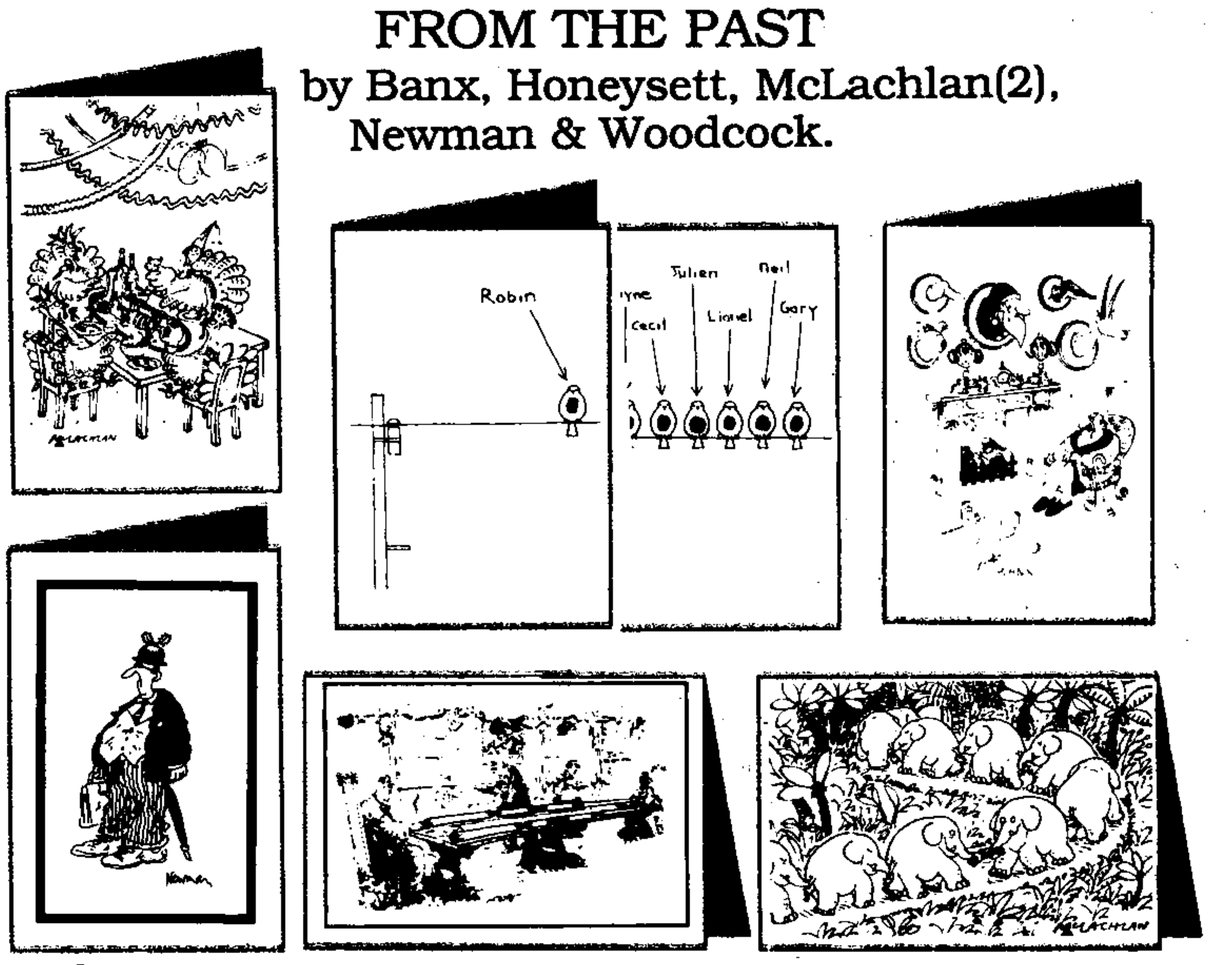

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